

COACH AND BUS

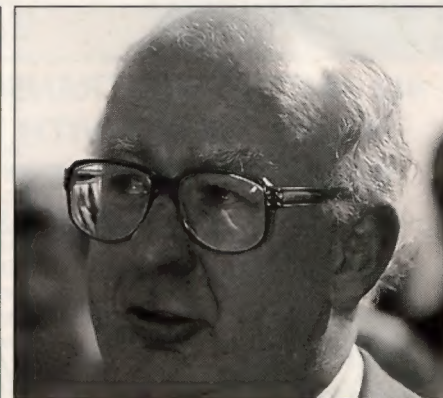
The PSV Industry's News Weekly

WEEK

ISSUE 63 MAY 1 1993



**BASKING IN
BRIGHTON'S GLORY**
**UK coach rally gives industry
a morale boost**



HELP ME STOP THE COWBOYS

Brigadier Turner's rallying call for stronger regulations.....Page 12

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Bill Cottham outlines his ideas for taking BCC forwardPage 16



TOP CLASS COMES SHINING THROUGH

Diplomat is coach of the year; Peter Bibby is winning driverPage 13

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1983 LEYLAND TIGER 245 DUPLÉ CARIBBEAN
12M, 49 recliners, red moquette, toilet n/s rear,
driver's berth, tinted side windows, curtains, drinks
machine, fridge, wired TV/video, white/orange/
green.

M.O.T. FEBRUARY 1994

1988 BOVA (November) FUTURA FHD 12.290
INTEGRAL 12M, 49 str, red moquette (44 recliners +
5-way fixed at rear) centre sunken toilet, continental
door, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains,
courier seat, white/orange/yellow.

M.O.T. NOVEMBER 1993

1982 BOVA (August) EUROPA INTEGRAL 12M, 53
recliners, red moquette, power entrance door,
cream/red.

M.O.T. FEBRUARY 1994

1989 BOVA FUTURA FHD 12.290 INTEGRAL 12M,
51 seats grey/red moquette (46 recliners + 5 way
fixed at rear), centre sunken toilet, continental door,
double glazed side windows, curtains, courier seat,
water boiler, coolbox, wired TV/video, cream/orange.

M.O.T. MARCH 1994

1987 DAF DKVL CAETANO ALGARVE 12M,
49 recliners, brown/beige moquette, centre sunken
toilet, continental door, double glazed side windows,
courier seat, TELMA retarder, power entrance door,
white/blue.

M.O.T. MAY 1993

1989 LEYLAND TIGER (260 BHP) DUPLÉ 320 12M,
53 recliners, brown/beige/orange moquette, double
glazed tinted side windows, pull-down blinds,
TELMA retarder, chassis autolube, cream/orange/
yellow.

M.O.T. MARCH 1994

1981 LEYLAND LEOPARD DUPLÉ DOMINANT II
12M, 53 recliners, brown/orange moquette, tinted
side windows, curtains, power entrance door, Bristol
dome, cream/green.

M.O.T. JULY 1993

1988 BEDFORD YNV PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200,
53/55 seats, brown moquette, courier seat, power
entrance door, cream/red.

M.O.T. JANUARY 1994

1989 LEYLAND TIGER (CUMMINS L10) PLAXTON
PARAMOUNT 3200 12M, 53 recliners, brown/beige/
orange moquette, double glazed tinted side
windows, pull-down blinds, TELMA retarder, chassis
autolube, cream/orange/yellow.

M.O.T. FEBRUARY 1994

1987 DAF DKVL PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500
12M, 51 recliners, red/grey moquette, rear sunken
toilet, continental entrance/exit door, tinted side
windows, curtains, courier seat, drinks machine,
power entrance door, wired TV/video, TELMA
retarder, ABS anti-lock braking, cream/duo blue.

M.O.T. MAY 1993

1989 LEYLAND TIGER (260 BHP) PLAXTON
PARAMOUNT 3200 12M, 53 recliners, brown/beige/
orange moquette, double glazed tinted side
windows, pull-down blinds, TELMA retarder, chassis
autolube, cream/orange/yellow.

M.O.T. DECEMBER 1993

1982 LEYLAND LEOPARD DUPLÉ DOMINANT IV
11M, 53 seats brown/orange moquette, power
entrance door, semi automatic gearbox, white/red.

M.O.T. FEBRUARY 1994

1985 BEDFORD YNV DUPLÉ LASER, 53 E-type
seats, brown moquette finished white/blue.

M.O.T. FEBRUARY 1994

1981 BOVA (August) EUROPA INTEGRAL 12M,
53 recliners, red moquette, power entrance door,
cream/red.

M.O.T. OCTOBER 1993

1984 DAF SB2300 JONCKHEERE JUBILEE P50
12M, 49 recliners, brown/beige/red moquette, rear
floor mounted toilet, continental door, driver's berth,
water boiler, white/beige/brown.

M.O.T. JULY 1993

1989 VOLVO B10M GL VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H 12M
51/55 recliners, grey/red moquette, centre sunken
demountable toilet, continental door, tinted side
windows, curtains, courier seat, all white.

M.O.T. NOVEMBER 1993

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COACH AND BUS

The PSV Industry's News Weekly

WEEK

ISSUE 63 MAY 1 1993

Early indicators suggest that the coming coach tour season is going to be as hard a trading environment as the pessimists could guess.

For many of the operator's clients, the recession is still very much a reality. Half a per cent on the Gross Domestic Product and confidence from the CBI has little meaning for ordinary people when the dole queue stretches into their family and wages are lower than last year.

Not only is there uncertainty about jobs, but even elderly people with substantial investments are now worrying. For although the low interest rate may suit vehicle buyers, it has cut the over 55s' disposable income.

'Competition is a fact of life, and no amount of bleating will make it go away. Complaints are justified only where the playing field isn't a level one and, if it is true that some hotels are operating outside of the package regulation, something needs to be done'

Yes, there are roundabouts as well as swings. Hotel rates are extremely low for late bookings, and there are a few bargain-hunting holiday-makers around to snap them up. But now the hotels themselves are heading into conflict with operators by running their own tours.

Competition is a fact of life, and no amount of bleating will make it go away. Complaints are justified only where the playing field isn't a level one and, if it is true that some hotels are operating outside of the package regulation, something needs to be done.

We agree wholeheartedly with the Bus & Coach Council's spokesman; "shop" the cowboy tour operators; and promote your own bonding, insurance or trust accounts. You have spent a great deal of money ensuring your clients have peace of mind. Yet the public is ignorant of the fact that this is now a right, not a privilege.

Since the DTI has failed to do so, someone has to tell the public that its money is safe. It might even instil a little booking confidence back into the market.

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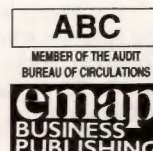
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COACH AND BUS WEEK ENDING 1 MAY 1993

■ **Derby City Transport has taken over** the 19-bus operation of its main competitor, Camms of Nottingham. The operation, which consists of school contracts infilled with commercial journeys in the city, is being continued by DCT virtually unchanged, so DCT will, in effect, be competing with itself. Page 8

■ **Tour operators who levy** last-minute surcharges on passengers are bringing the whole of the holiday industry into disrepute, claims Shearings and John Slatcher. He was responding to numerous calls from elderly people travelling with other operators. Page 10

■ **The Travellers operation won** the top coach award at the 39th UK coach rally last weekend. Its £185,000 Diplomat took the coveted Coach of the Year trophy while driver John Godrich was finalist in the driving competition. Page 13

■ **South Eastern traffic commissioner** Brigadier Michael Turner used the Brighton rally to launch an attack on the so-called cowboy element in the coach and bus industry. He called for tougher regulations to support the high standards being publicly displayed by the rally entrants. Page 12

■ **Bournemouth Heritage Transport** is to diversify from what was its core operation of open-top tourist bus services in Bournemouth and Southampton - with a conductor-crewed service in the Bournemouth area. The first service is registered to start operation on May 17. Page 14

■ **At the Bus & Coach Council Scotland** annual conference, Gleneagles, BCC president Bill Cottham presented his personal vision of changes he would like to see in the BCC if it is to stay ahead in the game. Page 16

COACH AND BUS EVENTS

● May 2 to 7: UITP International Congress and City Transport Exhibition, Sydney, Australia, tel UITP on 010 32 2 673 6100, fax 010 32 2 660 1072

● May 5-6: Safety in Vehicle Fleet Management, University Training Group, Loughborough University of Technology, Joyce Motyka, tel 0509 222175

● June 17: Italian bus systems, Buses Worldwide, Tallant Hall, Drummond St, London, organiser Ian Johnston, 3 Cypress Drive, Fleet, Hants GU13 9HE

● September 13 to 17: PTRC European Transport Highways and Planning 21st Annual Summer Meeting, University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, Zofia Duszynska, tel 081 741 1516, fax 081 741 5993:

● September 13 - 17: 26th International Symposium on Automotive Technology and Automation Conference, Aachen, Germany. ISATA, tel 081 681 3069

● September 26: SHOWBUS, Imperial War Museum, Duxford. Trade enquiries ONLY to Charles Nicholson, Showbus, The Apothecaries Lodges, off Collinswood Road, Farnham Common, Bucks.

● Autotech '93: November 16-19, 1993, National Exhibition Centre Birmingham. Julie Brown/Corinne Paine, IMechE, tel: 071 973 1316

COACH

Operators slate own-tour hotels

By Mark Williams

OPERATORS have hit back at hotels advertising their own packages, and are threatening to "shop" those which are not meeting the package tour regulations.

An epidemic of hotel-organised package tours has hit the coach tour trade this year, undercutting prices, and now angry operators say they may boycott the culprits and report them to the Trading Standards Office.

Some hotels have been struggling during the recession to get high occupancy, and there are high levels of insolvency in the hotel trade. As a result, a number are now selling their own packages including transport.

"I am worried by hotels doing their own thing, and I'm convinced most are ignorant of the package tour regulations," said the managing director of Southampton-based Angela Holidays, Colin Hearn. "I'm quite positive some of them don't know what they are doing."

"There appears to be nothing we can do directly, apart from approach the Trading Standards Office and ask them to check whether these places comply with the regulation. But is that the kind of thing we should be doing?"

Bere Regis Coaches' general manager Alex Wylie said he'd expected some

teething troubles with the regulation: "I could foresee some dispute. Fortunately, this company has a good relationship with its hotels, which it has used for years."

"Hypothetically, if any we use had advertised their own tours, I would want to know why. The answer I got would determine what action I would take," said Mr Wylie. "I certainly would want to see everyone following the regulation."

Crusader of Barnsley said it wasn't worried about reputable tour operators such as Newmarket, Leger and Blue Chip advertising at low rates but more concerned that newspapers exhibited little loyalty and may even prop up tours with free advertising.

"We once had a situation where a newspaper had come in at £10 less for a weekend in London, in the same edition as our advert," said partner Cynthia Crowcroft. "I worked out the costs, and the profit simply didn't justify the advertising space."

One other operator, who did not want to be named, said there was need for a shake-up in newspaper-promoted coach holidays.

One tour firm, he said, was advertising a week in Austria for around £90,



Punters like these now at risk from unbonded hotel tours

while his own firm's holiday is £130: "They'll make no profit on that price. Their profit will come from the hidden costs such as 'optional' excursions and meals," he said.

"I'd be willing to bet holidaymakers will end up paying closer to £200. Our price includes everything, but that's not how the public sees it."

A spokesman for the Bus & Coach Council said pricing of tours was a simple commercial problem but, where the regulation was concerned, there were simple solutions: "Have no hesitation in shopping them to the Trading Standards Office," he said.

"Operators could also try promoting the protection they offer instead of complaining about those who haven't."

● What problems do newspaper promotions cause your tour programme? Let us know by writing or sending a fax on 0733 62656.

BUS

Another strike for London

LONDON Buses staff have approved escalation of industrial action and a public petition, and will lobby Parliament on May 4 over pay cuts. The Transport and General Workers' Union accused London Buses of eroding members' pay and lengthening their hours to sweeten the LB companies for privatisation.

Announcing a further strike on May 10, TGWU district officer Ken Fuller said members were as determined as ever: "In fact, some delegates at the conference were calling

for more extensive strikes," he said.

"London Buses should now realise that this dispute is not about to go away. It should meet us at the negotiating table to resolve it once and for all."

Last week's strike was claimed by London Buses to have brought about half of all London's buses to a halt. LB claimed the remaining services were running more efficiently than during previous strikes, and threatened drivers with job losses.

CBW

■ BUS

Lull in Darlington as main ops cut back...

By Andrew Jarosz

A TEMPORARY peace between the two warring operators in Darlington started last week, after the first major retrenchments by Darlington Transport and Westcourt Group subsidiary United Automobile.

Both operators reduced their services on the town network after nearly seven years of headlong competition, in recognition of the declining passenger market, which had not been sufficiently stimulated by high-frequency services.

The cuts come after the introduction of a code of conduct for the town centre which limits each departure stand to one bus, and expressions of disquiet by Dur-



United minis challenged Darlington

ham County Council over the level of congestion on the main town centre streets.

Before deregulation, Darlington Transport enjoyed a virtual monopoly of town routes, which was chal-

lenged by United in August 1986 by the start of a high-frequency minibus network.

The network peaked during 1987/88 and, despite some minor withdrawals, attrition continued at simi-

lar levels.

Last week's changes, which reduced each operator's commitment by about five vehicles, came after continuing passenger-carrying reductions prompted economy measures. As a result, congestion has eased considerably.

Darlington Transport md Stuart Hyslop, whose company continued to operate full-size buses despite the influx of minibuses, described the cuts as inevitable.

"United thought they could wipe us out in six months and we're still here, although not making much money. I'd like to think that things will settle down but, of course, they never do," he said.

■ BUS

New move by Ribble in Lancaster

STAGECOACH subsidiary Ribble Motor Services of Preston has confirmed its intention not to bid for Lancaster City Transport (*Coach and Bus Week*, April 24). But, in a pre-emptive move, it plans to step up services in Lancaster and introduce new fares cuts and initiatives.

Ribble commercial director Ben Colson acknowledged the proposals might be seen as spoiling tactics, but emphasised nothing underhand was being done and that the long-term future of transport in Lancaster was at stake, with a real need to increase business.

Observers think the move could substantially weaken the finances of Lancaster City Transport and make the company either unviable or put off existing interested bidders.

Mr Colson said the company was not bidding for Lancaster City Transport, with which Ribble already has a complete network co-ordinated and registered

with the Office of Fair Trading, because the attitude of the OFT was not clear.

"We would probably offer the ratepayers the best price, but then the situation might be put on hold while the OFT investigated, leaving the whole network to stagnate," he said.

"There are big issues of bus priority and infrastructure coming up here and any disbenefit from the uncertainty caused would hit the passengers.

"We are aware that the five bidders on the shortlist contain aggressive companies which may choose to attack Ribble, so we are giving them all ten weeks notice of our future plans to consider," Mr Colson said.

Ribble plans to upgrade fares and ticketing on two key corridors - the 271 group of services from the University to Heysham via Morecambe and the 223/4 services from Lancaster to Heysham via Bare.

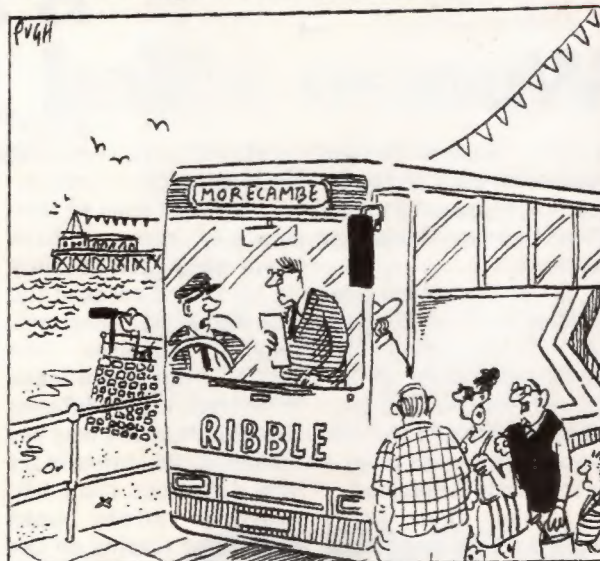
In the light of the fares experiment at the end of last

year, Ribble thinks there is scope to generate patronage with fare cuts but, to avoid the situation last year where Lancaster City Transport did not accept return tickets on some occasions, Ribble has now registered additional journeys on the target services which shadow Lancaster City Transport's exist-

ing workings.

"Fares in this area are higher than they need to be and, to offer the best services, we will operate all the workings ourselves.

"This is not a sneaky thing. We have developed a rational response and given everyone plenty of notice," Mr Colson said. **CBW**



"AH... BUT I'VE HAD TO REGISTER THE ROUTES SO THAT THE HOLIDAYMAKERS COULD GET HOME"

■ BUS

...but a new one starting

AS the two major operators scaled down competition on town routes in Darlington, a new operator - the South Durham Bus Company, led by former United managing director Andrew Guest - registered its intention to operate competitive services in the town.

Mr Guest and his opposite number Barry Connor at Tees & District were made redundant by the Westcourt group at the end of last year, when senior and administrative staff were cut in a £1 million economy plan (*Coach and Bus Week*, December 12). Both had been with the companies since their formation in February 1990.

Brushing aside suggestions of a revenge attack, Mr Guest said he had always wanted to stay in the bus industry and, as he was unwilling to move, the most logical way forward was to set up on his own.

"All that's in the past," he said "but there is no point for me to move across the country to a new position, only to face redundancy again."

South Durham has an O-licence for 15 buses and intends to introduce minibuses on six Darlington routes running at frequent intervals from the Market Place from May 27.

All six routes mirror existing United routes, although the one to Minors Crescent also affects Darlington Transport. Ten-minute running times in each direction will involve at least 12 buses, with at least 36 additional departures per hour between 7.45 am and 6 pm.

Operating premises are being rented on the Faverdale Industrial Estate with around 15 drivers being employed initially. Mr Guest confirmed the business was solely in his ownership, and he had not yet appointed any additional supervisory staff.

Both incumbent operators have already made it plain they don't want a new entrant into a highly marginal marketplace.

■ A south coast bus driver has been badly assaulted after refusing to let a couple smoke on his bus. Darren Smith, 26, a driver with Blue Admiral in Portsmouth, was punched and slapped by a man and a woman, ending up with a broken nose and a black eye. Appealing for witnesses to the assault a police spokesman said: "After the couple sat down the man shouted from the rear of the bus if he could smoke. He was told he could not smoke on the bus."

■ Saturday May 8 is the date of the 14th Green Line Fun Day. Green Line in conjunction with Woburn Safari Park will provide a free day out for some 1,000 needy children who, with their helpers, will be travelling to the park from various garages around the Home Counties, arriving at Todding-ton Service Station (North-bound) at 10 am. From there some 30 coaches will travel in convoy under police escort to the park. Everything is donated free of charge - the coaches, the drivers' time and admission to the park.

■ London Transport has teamed up with Drinkwise - a public education campaign to promote sensible drinking, to encourage London's pub users to go home by bus. The campaign was launched on Monday by Kenneth Carlisle MP, minister for roads and traffic, with promotional beermats and stickers being sent to thousands of pubs throughout London on that day.

■ Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority is putting a consultation paper to both operators and passengers reviewing the concessionary fares scheme and accessible transport provision. Options for changing the charges and scheme coverage, currently 30p on most journeys, are suggested, as well as extensions to the accessible provision that currently exists.

■ Merseytravel is planning to expand the membership of its Transport Access Panel to include representatives of the Disabled Drivers Association, the National League of the Blind and Disabled, and the British Deaf Association. The advisory body already has representatives of local disabled and community groups.

COACH AND BUS

Minister gets tough

PUBLIC transport minister Roger Freeman has confirmed the Government's tough line on local bus privatisation.

At this week's *Coach and Bus Week* conference Mr Freeman said sale of local authority bus companies would be compulsory. "Meanwhile it is clearly in everyone's interest that PTC sales should take place voluntarily and not as a semi-distress sale."

Stressing the hard-line on single tender sales Mr Freeman said it is unlikely that any new proposal will be approved and he advised authorities to devote time

By Mike Morgan

and energy to a competitive sale.

Nevertheless he restated the Government's preference for management and employee participation with an "inside-track" preferential discount of five per cent.

Mr Freeman had a warning for SYT and other single tender sales already approved. "I must say that if

we do not hear soon of progress towards a sale within a reasonable time-scale, our approval in principle will be withdrawn." In a direct reference to asset stripping and excess profits on property sales, he said these concerns could be covered by sale agreements.

But there was a further warning for new local near monopoly. "We would be sympathetic to requests to



Roger Freeman

eliminate that company and its owning group from the competition, if that is the wish of the local authority vendor."

● Full report next week

COACH

Wallace Arnold profits fall

PROFITS of WALLACE Arnold's parent company, Barr and Wallace Arnold Trust plc are profits down 14 per cent and borrowings up almost 85 per cent, to £20.2 million, for 1992.

Turnover of the group fell just over a per cent, to £227 million, and pre-tax profits dropped to £3.7 million. However, fixed assets rose almost 20 per cent as a result of hotel acquisitions being brought on to the balance sheet, and gearing rose to 74 per cent.



Market-hit coach tours division

The Wallace Arnold leisure and holidays division saw turnover rise 8.5 per cent to £71.8 million but profit fell 16 per cent to £3.1 million. There were 8 per cent more passengers taking coach holidays overall, and a

healthy 31 per cent increase in the overseas carryings due chiefly to Wallace Arnold's tie-up with EuroDisney.

The end-of-year report blames the market for WA's problems. It says high

demand in the early season tailed away after the general election. The division's Sibbald Travel agency, based in Edinburgh, reversed the trend by getting a 12 per cent increase in bookings and setting new records for profit.

BUS

Woman killed

A DEVON General Bayline minibus reversed over an 81-year-old woman at Exeter's Paris Road depot, killing her last week.

It was the second fatal accident involving an octogenarian in two years in which passengers walking off designated footpaths had been hit by reversing buses. But Devon General says there is no solution to the problem.

Already there are a dozen signs warning passengers to stay on the footpaths, and all Mercedes 709D buses run from the depot are

equipped with reversing lights and audible warnings.

"In the 29 years we have operated here, we have never had a serious injury on the paved areas of the bus station, said Bayline's general manager Len Wright. "But if you leave those areas, with 17 different departure bays in a busy bus station, it can obviously get very dangerous, much like crossing railway lines instead of staying on the platform."

"It's impossible to devise a system that avoids the

BUS

United-Eden battle comes to an end

INTENSE competition between Westcourt subsidiary United Automobile and independent Eden of West Auckland in the Bishop Auckland and Newton Aycliffe areas has ceased with the retrenchment of a number of competitive services.

Services between

Shildon, Bishop Auckland and Crook; Ferryhill and Bishop Auckland; Bishop Auckland, Newton Aycliffe and Darlington have either been cut or co-ordinated.

United has also replaced some minibus services in Newton Aycliffe with full-size buses and a reduction of frequency.

reversing of vehicles, although that's what we would like."

A third accident victim was her fault, said Mr Wright.

returned to the bus station to apologise to the driver and admit that the accident was her fault, said Mr Wright.

CBW

Spectra



Not just a pretty face

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■ BUS

Camms bus operation taken over by Derby



Camms continues under DCT

By Andrew Jarosz

DERBY City Transport has taken over the bus operations of its main competitor, Camms of Nottingham, whose services will continue virtually unchanged.

The 19-bus operation, which consists of school contracts infilled with commercial journeys, is being continued by DCT.

Managing director Bob Hind said DCT offered to continue Camms work when it seemed that the independent was thinking of pulling out.

"We are operating from Camm's premises and paying rent, we have not taken any buses over, giving them income from disposal of the vehicles and we've taken on 21 drivers, leaving very few job losses," he said.

"Like it or not, some of the public have expressed a preference for Camms during the last three years, and we are in the business of giving people what they want. We

have altered some of the timings to offer a higher level of unduplicated service, but the lower fares will continue."

DCT has moved 15 of its own buses to Nottingham and joined some of its own school contracts to the £250,000 worth of contracts that Camms operated.

Mr Hind claims that those vehicles were only running during the peaks and therefore being used more efficiently. Five Camms buses are being used temporarily until other second-hand vehicles can be acquired.

Existing wage rates are being continued at the separate base, where two fitters are employed under the supervision of transport manager Kevin Bellfield and John Tidbury, formerly Lincoln City Transport manager. All major engineering work is undertaken at DCT's Derby depot.

Camms Coaches under the ownership of Pat Camm continues to run its coaching business unchanged from the existing premises at Ilkeston Road.

■ BUS

University service sparks unfair competition storm

NEW competitive bus services, set up this year by the University of Hertfordshire (formerly known as Hatfield Polytechnic), have brought complaints of unfair competition from Blaze field Holdings subsidiaries in the area, which are convinced that operations are not viable.

Hatfield Polytechnic traditionally operated a number

of its own private services for students transferring between locations.

At the beginning of this year, however, some were registered commercially and recently regular headways and low fares have been established on routes from Hatfield to Watford, St Albans, Welwyn Garden City and Hertford.

Blaze field chairman Giles Fearnley said that, from his observations, the number of passengers carried at lower fares was insufficient to make the operation viable.

"We have complained to the traffic commissioner that this competition is unfair since it was opened up to the general public at uneconomical fares. It is being heavily advertised and we wonder who is subsidising it."

The University bus company competes strongly against Blaze field subsidiaries Sovereign Bus and Welwyn Hatfield Line, but its services also affect neighbouring companies Luton & District and County Bus of Harlow.



University turned operator



Destination Brighton - a 1953 Scania-Vabis C50 Metropoli

■ COACH AND BUS

Historic commercial vehicle rally will be held this weekend

THE repeal of the infamous Red Flag Act in 1896 will again be celebrated this weekend with the 30th historic commercial vehicle London to Brighton run.

Organised by the Historic Commercial Vehicle Society, the 60-mile event is believed to be the world's largest and oldest rally for commercial vehicles, with 250 entrants.

Sponsor, Scania has two vehicles from its factory museum in Sodertalje near Stockholm. The oldest is a 1953 Scania-Vabis C50 Metropoli - the forerunner of the modern Scania citybus and the product of a joint venture with Mack of the USA.

CBW

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■ COACH

Surcharges not on says Shearings md

TOUR operators who levy last-minute surcharges on passengers are bringing the whole of the holiday industry into disrepute, Shearings md John Slatcher says.

Mr Slatcher was responding to numerous calls from elderly people travelling with other operators. He claimed that it might even be illegal to sell holidays at brochure prices knowing that a surcharge would be added. "Most rep-

By Andrew Jarosz

utable coach operators like ourselves and Wallace Arnold make a no-surcharge guarantee, and bought forward last year to firm up on brochure prices.

"I had one call from an elderly lady who booked a £1,000 tour for two with another company and, having paid the price in full, received a second bill for £95."

Under ABTA rules, operators may apply surcharges of up to 10 per cent without clients having the option to cancel. The surcharge of 9.5 per cent in the case of the elderly couple would not give them the option of cancellation without incurring penalty charges."

Mr Slatcher hopes to highlight the issue and persuade ABTA to tighten up its rules. "Most operators buy

in forward currency and fuel futures to avoid falling victim to currency fluctuations.

"Some companies could be deliberately underpricing their tours to win business knowing they can slap on surcharge.

"I don't think operators can prey on the vulnerability of fixed-income pension-

John Slatcher: no surcharges

ers by charging big last-minute surcharges. Why is ABTA not taking up this kind of sharp practice that only serves to give the public a bad impression of coach operators?"



■ COACH

Day at the museum

THE Coach Tourism Council has selected the Black Country Museum to host this year's Coaching For Pleasure Day - a public relations promotion now in its fourth year.

On September 14, around 1,000 group travel organisers are expected to arrive aboard 35 Coach Tourism Council members' vehicles, promoting coach tourism both to the public and to national newspapers and TV, who have attended the event since its inception.

"Industrial Heritage Year has brought a new tourism focus to the Midlands and we felt Dudley was an appropriate area for our fourth Coaching For Pleasure Day," said Gerry Topiol, CTC chairman.

He said the event was also an opportunity for participating operators to get local media news coverage.

Details from Graham Fry, at Warrens Coaches, on 0580 200226.



Independent has one of last Paramount B10Ms

■ COACH

Upgrade goes on for Independent

INDEPENDENT Coaches of Horsforth, Leeds, is continuing its 1993 fleet upgrade with the purchase of one of the last available Plaxton Paramount-bodied Volvo B10Ms.

The 53-seater, which is the first new coach for Independent in ten years, follows three second-hand Leyland National 2s, which are

replacing Bristol single deckers on contract work.

The coach, which carries the old-style 3200 body, is fitted with standard seating and will be used mainly on group work.

However, it will also feature on some of the extended tours run jointly with parent company Thornes of Bubwith.

■ COACH

Parry's buys two more Cityliners

TWO Neoplan N116/3 tri-axle Cityliner coaches represent a repeat order from Dave Parry Travel of Cheslyn Hay, West Midlands. These are numbers nine and 10 over the past five years.

They are the first 3.9-metre high

Cityliners in the UK. Both feature a very comprehensive specification which includes: Sutrak air conditioning, walk-through kitchen to servery equipped with fridge, sink, water boiler and microwave, 48 Vogel reclin-

ing seats, double courier seat, off-side sunken toilet, TV/video, pannier lockers, cruise control. The Cityliners are powered by Mercedes OM 402 LA 381 PS twin-turbo engine, driving through a ZF eight-speed manual gearbox. **CBW**



Dave Parry Travel's ninth and tenth N116/3 tri-axle Neoplan Cityliners

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Keep 'cowboy' element out - commissioner

By Mike Morgan

BRIGADIER Michael Turner, the South Eastern traffic commissioner, used last week's Brighton coach rally to launch an attack on the so-called cowboy element in the coach and bus industry. He called for tougher regulations to support the high standards being publicly displayed by the rally entrants.

Speaking at the presentation of awards at the climax of last weekend's 39th UK Coach Rally on Madeira Drive, he said: "We are living in an era when the public are very quick to point the finger at the coach and bus operator who isn't doing things right."

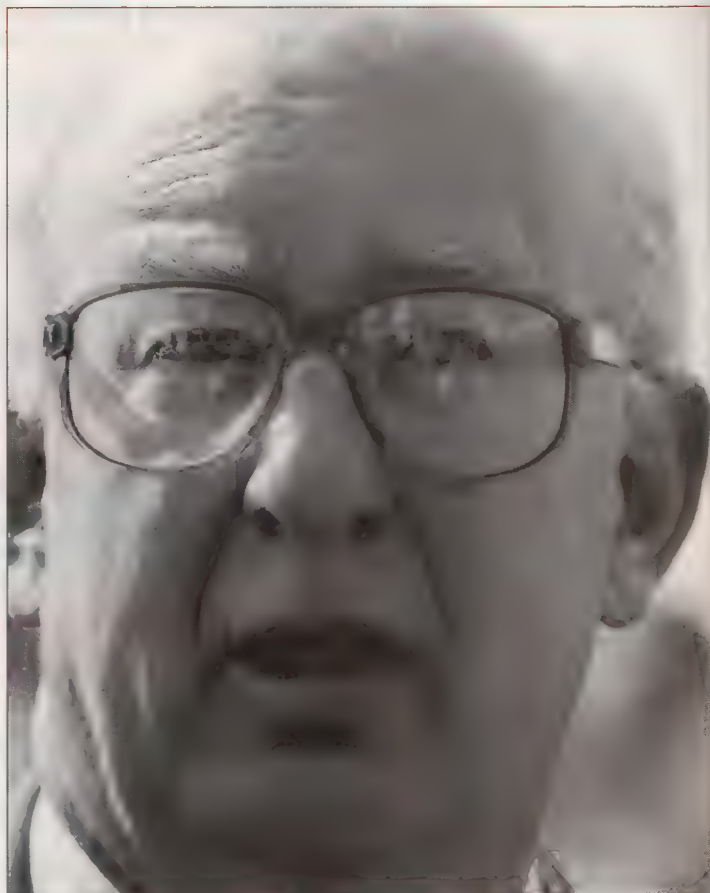
He told the assembled spectators that the rally was a display of what was good in the industry and claimed that the Brighton rally had a key role in im-

proving its image. "The rally balances the position."

The traffic commissioner said that the skills of the drivers and the standards of presentation of vehicles and staff were there for all to see. "I am dedicated to establishing and maintaining these standards", he said, "and the rally helps me achieve these objectives."

In a rallying call for uniform standards across the coach and bus industry he said: "I want the industry to persuade Parliament to strengthen, not relax, the regulations." And, with a clear reference to the target of his campaign, he said: "I want to make sure that the cowboys are kept out of the industry."

Brigadier Turner commended the quality of the rally entry and congratulated the winners: "To win at this high standard is praiseworthy indeed."



Brigadier Michael Turner

Boon's scoops in awards

WHILE winners of the top trophies, coach of the year and driver of the year, inevitably grabbed the limelight, Boon's of Boreham took home the largest collection of awards from the UK Coach Rally.

Nobody could ignore the undisguised pleasure on the face of Hector Boon as his team

led by driver Richard Osborne stepped forward to shake hands with Brigadier Michael Turner at the presentation ceremony.

As the public address announced the list of prizes it quickly became clear that another pair of hands was required, so Mr Boon moved up

to share the glory.

Boon's new Van Hool Alizee-bodied tri-axle Scania K113 was voted top touring/express/luxury coach. It also won trophies for top Scania, top Van Hool, top coach fitted with a Telma retarder ... and it took one of three Michelin Man awards.



Brigadier Michael Turner, right, presents Hector Boon, far left, and his team with armfuls of trophies

The 1993 UK Coach

COACH driver of the year - Peter Bibby, Bibby's of Ingleton

Bus driver of the year - Richard Stephens, Selkent

Coach of the year - Kässbohrer Setra S215HD, Travellers of Hounslow

Bus of the year - Marshall-bodied Iveco 49-10, Selkent

Best in all classes, Cymru and Lucas Kienzle prize for tachograph analysis - Plaxton Paramount-bodied Volvo B10M, Clarkes of Tredegar

Top team of the year - Bryons Coaches of Skewen

Peter Bostock Trophy for top driver on Saturday tests and Carlton PSV Sales trophy - Colin Ebdon, Ebdon's of Sidcup

Top lady driver - Robyn Bennett, Hills of Hersham

Mini/midi driver of the year - John Butler, Hills of Hersham

Don trophy for top mini/midi coach - Fleurs de Lys Lincoln, Spirit of London

Highest standard coach - Plaxton Premiere-bodied Volvo B10M, Capital of Heathrow



Coaches and candyfloss



The gallery at Madeira D

Travellers crowned top of the class

By Mike Morgan

TRAVELLERS lifted the top coach award at the 39th UK coach rally last weekend. Its £185,000 Diplomat won the coveted Coach of the Year trophy while driver, John Godrich was finalist in the driving competition.

Managing director Tony Grayson says the high-spec Diplomat has justified its claim for a slice of the top-flight corporate market. "It's a market that is coming on faster than we expected."

The Diplomat's doubtless virtues impressed the rally judges sufficiently to discount the age-old pressure to favour a standard touring coach for the industry's top accolade. Although victory justified rally entry, Mr Grayson says that the result has repercussions throughout the company. Within minutes of lifting the trophy he said: "We've

phoned the office already. It's given a boost to morale throughout the workforce."

Mr Grayson had a message about the rally itself: "It gives the whole industry a boost and winning becomes a useful selling point with customers."

The Spanish-built Kässbohrer Setra is powered by 370 bhp MAN engine and was fitted out in the UK by JL Developments.

The star-studded manifest for this 30-seater takes the usual coach concept and launches it into a new level of refinement. It has Royal class seating in leather and velour fitted in a fully carpeted, air-conditioned interior. No fewer than five monitors are added to the video system; two CD players feed the main saloon and rear lounge; a full



Diplomat's virtues shone through

kitchen with fridge is complemented by servery with coffee percolator and microwave; an optics bar is supplied for the passengers in the main lounge and a servery for those at the

rear; each seat has tables; and the mandatory list of safety features is boosted by a reversing camera and Traffic Master computer traffic report system.

Rally award winners



the scene at Brighton



the scene at Brighton

Top touring/express/luxury coach, Telma Retarder, Scania, Van Hool and a Michelin trophies - Van Hool-bodied Scania K113 tri-axle, Boons of Boreham

Top coach in class F - Kässbohrer Setra, Coliseum of Southampton

Top coach in class G/H and a Michelin trophy - Berkhof Excellence 2000-bodied Volvo B10M, Cantabrica of Watford driven by Brenda Custance

Berkhof and a Michelin trophy - Excellence 2000-bodied Volvo B10M, Cantabrica of Watford driven by Robert Barnard

Jonckheere trophy and smartest uniformed driver and/or courier - Tony Head and Deauville-bodied MAN 16-290, Reliance Coaches of Luton near Peterborough

Plaxton - Premiere-bodied Dennis Javelin, Coach Stop of Leigh-on-Sea

Drivers quiz prize - Glantawe Coaches, Pontardawe

Veteran driver (driver with longest PSV licence) - entry number 37, William Rostron of Hursts Coaches, Wigan

Homework pays off as Bibby wins again

PETER Bibby celebrated his return to Brighton by taking the coach driver of the year trophy. His smooth, measured, fault-free performance was the highlight of a tense final before a packed Madeira drive.

With two pieces of silverware already taking pride of place at his Ingleton home, Mr Bibby was determined to make the long trek from North Yorkshire worthwhile. A veteran of

driver of the year contests since 1977, he still has the 1991 Blackpool trophy and, after a hat-trick of driving successes, he retained the Brighton cup in 1980.

Mr Bibby, 40, told *Coach and Bus Week*: "There were a lot of good drivers who took it really seriously. There was so much to take in, but the marshalls and organisers did really well."

"The final was a five-minute course and I knew it

had to be a clear round - if you didn't go clear you weren't going to win."

While the Sunday final against the clock introduced luggage loading to the usual cone-dodging manoeuvres, he confessed: "It broke your concentration half way through." But the Yorkshireman remained cool with a time of five minutes 27 seconds in his five-year-old DAF/Plaxton.

He was seen walking the course and measuring angles before the start. "If you don't do your homework..."

After giving Brighton a miss last year, because he was too busy, and being unhappy about the location in Southampton, this was Mr Bibby's first UK Coach Rally entry for five years. He said: "I always aim to get into the finals, otherwise I'd be disappointed not to have made a weekend of it."



Peter Bibby is top driver

■ BUS

Conductors for Bournemouth

BOURNEMOUTH Heritage Transport is to diversify from what was its core operation of open-top tourist bus services in Bournemouth and Southampton - with a conductor-crewed service in the Bournemouth area.

The first service is registered to start operation on May 17, on Route 604 between Cunningham Crescent and Bournemouth Square.

It will use four Routemasters with a green and cream livery to distinguish the service from Wilts and Dorset's red buses and the yellow buses of local municipal Bournemouth Transport.

By Rod Davey

In total 11 Routemasters have been purchased by Bournemouth Heritage Transport, from Kelvin Scottish and Clydeside - joining its seven open toppers.

The company has recently had its O-licence extended on application to the Western Traffic Area for up to 17 vehicles - which will run out of a fleet of 23 buses of various marques and vinages. BHT is ready for expansion.

"We are looking at the possibilities for stage carriage operation in the Bournemouth and Christchurch areas, and are plan-

ning further applications in due course, but we have no plans for services in the Poole area," said BHT managing director Keith Baynton.

"We are expecting a vigorous response from Bournemouth Transport and will be keeping a close watch on the situation over the coming months." Bournemouth Transport's managing director Ted Reid was unavailable for comment at the time of going to press.

Mr Baynton emphasised that BHT had been encouraged in its operational expansion by the forthcoming privatisation of Bournemouth Transport -



Bournemouth Heritage Transport diversifying

and by its own philosophy on the type of operation required and the marketing of local services in this seaside tourist area.

"We will be using conductor-crewed Routemasters because we feel they are the tool for the job within this district," he said. "We also want to provide something different, otherwise we could have bought Fleetlines and got involved in head-on competition. But

that is not the game we are in."

However, BHT sees other advantages in its choice of vehicles quite apart from providing a differentiated product in a differentiated market. "Our company is now looking forward to a positive response locally to the return of crewed services - and we do not rule out using some of our open-toppers on local bus services," he said.

■ BUS

Liking biking

BIKES are being carried on Herefordshire buses for the first time as Hereford and Hay-on-Wye cyclists extend their rides with bus-bike days out. Yeomans Canyon Travel introduced the facility on Sundays and Bank Holidays with bikes carried in the boot of the bus for 50p. Branded the "Kilvert Connection" the service runs twice daily through Bredwardine, Hay and Clyro to Brecon - associated with Victorian diarist Francis Kilvert.

■ BUS

Bridlington councillors pass bus station plans

BRIDLINGTON councillors have approved a controversial new bus station - despite objections from residents.

East Yorkshire Borough Council planning committee heard that developers Henry Boot had threatened to withdraw from a 30-shop scheme unless the Princess

Street bus station went ahead. But planning director Robert Smith said: "This is not blackmail. You are often faced with developers seeking conditions."

Bus companies operating in the seaside town have welcomed the plans.

Peter Shipp, joint managing director of EYMS

Group, said: "As long as double deckers are able to use the bus station then we thoroughly approve."

"Facilities for buses in Bridlington have not been particularly good in recent years. It seems that people complain if there are no services, but don't always do much to help."



Peter Shipp

■ BUS

Turkish city orders 26 Optare Spectra deckers

TWENTY six Optare Spectra deckers have been ordered by Turkey's third largest city, Izmir.

Optare clinched the order, which is only the second significant UK bus deal with Turkey, following one for 20 Spectras by IETT Istanbul (Coach and Bus Week, February 20).

IZULUS, the private-sector operator which competes against municipally-owned ESHOT, operates 350 vehicles in a rapidly-expanding market and plans to use its first deckers on high-capacity city routes.

The company already carries 76.6 million passengers per year in a city where the rapidly expanding population is to be served by an upgrade in public transport facilities. The majority of Izmir buses are currently of German or Italian manufacture.

Optare will build the high-capacity deckers at its Crossgates factory to a low-height, dual-doorway configuration during the summer.

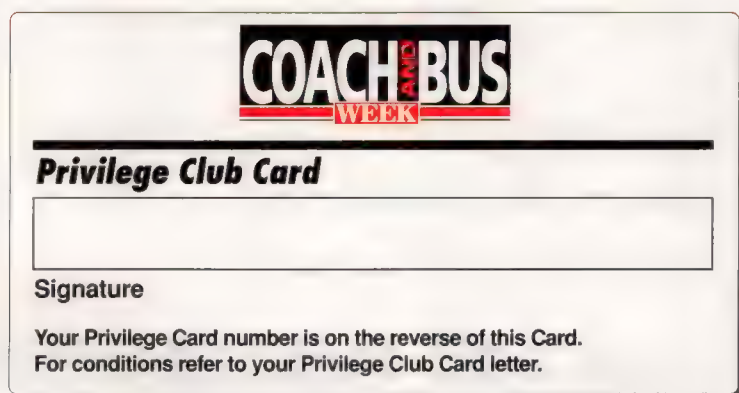
The deal was clinched after a personal visit to Optare by the Mayor of Izmir.

CBW



Optare clinched deal after visit by Izmir's mayor

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COACH AND BUS WEEK

How Bill Cottham sees BCC's future

BILL Cottham presented his personal vision of changes he would like to see in the Bus & Coach Council if it is to stay ahead of the game.

Although he is president of the BCC, Mr Cottham emphasised he was speaking personally when he described the present sections as "inappropriate." The current organisation by fleet

By Gavin Booth

size was transitional as bus industry ownership changed, he said. "It leads to anomalies, provides no clear coaching focus, and creates artificial divisions.

"When the BCC was formed in 1976 there was minimum EC transport legislation, no commuter light

rail, most major bus undertakings were publicly owned, and the industry was fully regulated. The operating, financial and legislative framework is now dramatically changed," he said.

Mr Cottham said it was essential for the BCC to become multi-modal, creating a "fixed track" sector. The membership base

should be broadened to take in non-operators such as tendering authorities, there should be a strong parliamentary committee lobbying national and European governments, and the council's regional role should be strengthened.

He concluded: "Only if the BCC adapts to become a strong, multi-modal trade



Bill Cottham

association - The British Public Transport Association - with an effective Pan-European voice, can the challenges facing operators be successfully met."

What they really want

THE wide gulf between what the public wants and what politicians believe the public wants was highlighted by Ernst Joos, deputy director of Zurich Transport Authority.

"If you ask the inhabitants of a town which transport policy should be followed, the citizens will not choose the car," he told the BCC audience at Gleneagles. "They are much more intelligent than politicians and other opinion-leaders believe and have higher values than merely standing still in a traffic jam."

He cited studies carried out for UITP which showed that 84 per cent of citizens favoured a public transport-weighted solution to transport planning, while opinion-formers who were asked to estimate the will of the people, estimated that only 49 per cent would be in favour.

Mr Joos suggested the reason for the discrepancy was that politicians are generally men aged between 20 and 60 who belong to that quarter of the population which uses the car to an above-average extent, and uses its own needs as a measure of those of all citizens.

Mr Joos went on to present Zurich as a model of an economic, environment-friendly transport policy, though in questions he admitted that one third of his undertaking's income came from the taxpayer.

I still back rail privatisation - Cox

IN his paper on rail opportunities for busmen, Brian Cox of Stagecoach said that rail privatisation offered great opportunities for improved services to the public — and that the alliance of private-sector disciplines with released railway management talent and commitment was potentially very exciting.

Stagecoach, he said, was a child of legislative change, and its success had been in concentrating on essentials, instilling a sense of ownership and trying to make "small is beautiful" work in a big organisation. These same policies would be carried forward into the rail business.

Mr Cox argued that rail privatisation would work only if there was a mix of management buyouts and outside buyers, as with bus privatisation.

The experience of Stagecoach Rail, formed just a year ago, was that the product was right, but there was too much reliance on BR to sell tickets and meet quality standards. Cox admitted that the operation was too small to carry the necessary overhead, and Stagecoach had lost too much money.

Now Stagecoach is essentially a seat wholesaler on Aberdeen/Glasgow-London services, and BR had the chance to get back into the Aberdeen market, which Mr Cox said they had in some ways regretted abandoning, and introduce some of the facilities Stagecoach had shown them passengers wanted.

"Our Inter-City contacts have worked hard to help make things work," said Mr Cox, "but we have found BR so big and unresponsive we just can't control our own product." The problem lay in the nature of BR, not its people. "The organisation is just too big and the culture simply is not suffi-



BUS & COACH COUNCIL SCOTLAND

ciently results-orientated. It's no wonder Stagecoach encountered difficulties with BR selling its tickets - I calculated once that BR had to brief at least 2,500 sales staff in what would be a tiny but complex part of their workload."

The Stagecoach requirements for franchising are very simple, said Cox. "We want viability, and acceptable risk/opportunity balance, and we want to be sure that we can provide an

tion, bureaucracy, the OFT and vehicle investment. Stagecoach, he said, was looking for franchisees to maintain all existing BR through-ticketing and ticket inter-availability. It was already in the process, with other interested parties, of establishing a Prospective Rail Operators' Association.

"How can we deliver a service if most of the resource elements that go into it are held by someone else?" He said he was not convinced that making Railtrack a separate body from BR would have much effect.

Stagecoach was looking for clearly-specified franchises, to run for 10 to 15 years with "grandfather rights" of renewal, subject to performance, and suitable financial arrangements for assets, particularly rolling stock, whose commercial life exceeds franchise life. He was worried by BR bureaucracy: "Much of Stagecoach's success has come from its ability to move quickly. We worry this whole apparatus could turn out worse than Marxist-Leninist central planning."

Summing up, Mr Cox said that the Railways Bill was basically an enabling tool. "We have to ensure that in its final form it is flexible where appropriate and definitive where it needs to positively assist the privatisation process.

"Potential franchisees need to be encouraged to help government to frame the working proposals, and government should be flexible in its approach. We believe existing public transport operators - whether from rail, bus or whatever background - are more likely to appreciate the potential problems than civil servants. We believe it can work, which is why we are hanging on in.

"And we will continue to play a positive role in the process. But we will only be there at the start if we believe it will work."



Brian Cox - 'Hanging on in'

improved service". But Stagecoach will not commit large amounts of equity to rail privatisation in the early years, said Mr Cox: "And we will ring-fence what we do commit."

Mr Cox identified the problem areas in rail privatisation as fragmentation, Railtrack, franchise specifica-

CBW

■ LIGHT RAIL

Manchester launches bid to raise Metrolink capital

GREATER Manchester Passenger Transport Authority has launched a series of new funding initiatives, with the aim of tripling the size of its Metrolink tramway by attracting significant amounts of private capital.

Five planned extensions to the system covering Salford Quays, Trafford Park, Eastlands and Ashton, Oldham and Rochdale, and South Manchester and airport have all been individually evaluated with possible private sector participation in infrastructure projects assessed.

The PTA is hoping that by adopting projects in-line with the Treasury fast-track approach as announced in the Chancellor's autumn

By Andrew Jarosz

statement, it will be able to jump the queue of similar rapid transit schemes in other areas looking for government approval and funding.

The European Commission has already given support by funding a special study, which is designed to show how public and private sector funds can be combined to attract major support from ERDF and other national agencies.

Locally, a private sector led funding group has been set up, following discussions between GMPTE and individual bodies, and the PTA now believes that they will use their resources to put

the funding group into action.

The PTA is now confident that the first project - an extension to Salford Quays, could be approved soon with construction starting as early as November this year. There has been active collaboration with Trafford Park Development Corporation and Salford City Council, with active pursuance of private funding for the four kilometre extension.

PTA chairman Councillor Joe Clarke claimed an excellent first year of Metrolink operation. "It has always been our intention to extend the system and today is just the beginning, and we are now even more con-



GMPTA plans to triple size of Metrolink network

vinced that we are right to do so", he said.

If the first bid succeeds, starts on further lines could

follow next year, increasing the network of 31 km by the beginning of the next decade.

■ BUS

Liverbus - first new vehicles in service

LIVERBUS, set up just three years ago by Geoff Metcalf, has its first new buses for service in Liverpool. They are four Volvo B10Bs with Northern Counties Paladin bodies - the first of a dozen to be delivered over the next 12 months.

The 50-strong Liverbus fleet was made up entirely of double-deckers until the arrival of the Paladins. "These new vehicles have given us a marvellous boost," said Mr Metcalf. "Reaction from our customers

has been tremendous. We went for single-deckers because for most of the day they offer enough seating capacity and at peak times their total capacity works out the same as for a double-decker.

"There's no question in my mind that the single-decker is a more attractive vehicle for our customers and we expect to find significant cost savings both in routine maintenance and in reduced levels of vandalism."

The Paladins - the first in the North West and the first on B10B - are built to DiPTAC specification and have 51 contoured Arianne seats. They can carry up to 25 standing passengers.



Liverbus passengers prefer new single deckers

■ BUS

GAN second largest operator of the Dart

GO-AHEAD Northern of Gateshead has become the largest Dennis Dart operator outside London, with the completion of the company's first year order of 90 vehicles.

The Darts have all been completed by Wrights, using the Alusuisse 40-seat Handybus bodywork, and have been allocated to the five bus-operating subsidiaries formed through the splitting of the whole Go-Ahead Northern company.

Commercial director Chris

Moyes said that, by and large, the Darts had come up to expectations. "We are in the process of finalising the next batch of orders and it's not inconceivable that we may order more," he said.

The company has now replaced the last of a once-considerable fleet of Leyland National Is and the latest batch of Darts has re-established the company's traditional dark red colour scheme with the North Tyne-side subsidiary Coastline. **CBW**



Subsidiary Coastline received latest batch of GAN Darts

Can I be a trustee under the package tour laws?

Q Please can you tell me if I can legally be the trustee of my company's tour customer account under the package tour laws? There seems to be a lot of conflicting advice on this subject.

T McC, Bedfordshire.

a The regulations simply say that clients' money must be, "held in the United Kingdom by a person as trustee for the consumer until the contract has been fully performed."

They do not categorically require the trustee to be a disinterested third party to the person supplying the package.

However, they do require the person supplying the package to produce to the trustee a signed statement that money is due.

This does lead to a view, favoured I understand by Trading Standards Officers, that this implies that the person supplying the package and the trustee would need to be different people.

Until this interpretation is tested in court, we are unlikely to know whether it is correct.

Your question suggests that you, as an individual, might be trustee of an account for the clients of a limited company.

As you probably know, the law regards a limited company as if it were an individual. Thus a statement signed on behalf of the company and given to you as trustee would be one step away from the situation outlined in the previous paragraph, even if the statement was signed by you.

You could distance yourself even further from this personality bridge if, say, your tours manager, was authorised to sign the statement on behalf of the company.

Although a trust can be set up without any legal formality, I would strongly advise you to have a trust deed drawn up by a solicitor.

Your bank will want something in writing to establish that the account in question is a trust

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questions on any aspects of coach or bus operation giving you problems should be sent to: **Marksman, Coach and Bus Week, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough PE1 1DS or fax 0733 62656**

account and the trust deed would also form evidence of the trust to satisfy any inquiry made by a Trading Standards Officer.

Q One of our drivers was caught smoking while driving a Routemaster. If he is prosecuted, would the fact that it was a half cab vehicle be a defence?

SB, Kent

a Very ingenious! It would need a very clever solicitor, or a dim-witted magistrate to pull it off, I fear - although it would be a very good point in mitigation - but not because he was in a closed cab as such, but because the purpose of the regulation seems to have changed.

It might be thought that the ban on drivers smoking related to safety. I think that, historically, this was the case.

However, although the 1990 "Conduct" regulations ban a driver smoking in or on a PSV when it is being used for the carriage of passengers, there is an interesting exclusion to that rule which was not in the previous (1936) regulations.

For drivers may now smoke on a PSV which is hired as a whole and the driver has the permission of the operator and the hirer.

As vehicles hired as a whole need to be driven just as safely as

those engaged in any other sort of use, this exception suggests that the purpose on this ban on smoking drivers is no longer about road safety, but is retained to serve the interests of passenger comfort.

Q Can you give me any advice on how to value my business? I have no family to pass it on to and I would like to think about retirement.

SMY, Gloucestershire.

a I know that estate agents are not exactly the flavour of the month, but would you contemplate selling a house or land without a professional valuation and probably by using professional sellers too?

I think the same has to be even more true of selling a business, where taxation, work in progress, goodwill, and the employment status of staff on transfer are but four of many additional complications that will affect the price.

I would most strongly recommend that you talk with an accountant who is experienced in business transfers before you go very far down this road.

But as a starting point, it is perhaps helpful to remember that most purchasers want to see a return on the investment they make and will therefore relate the price

they will pay to the earnings of the business.

Most businesses change hands for between four and eight times the average pre-tax profits over the previous three years. (eg if the average pre-tax profits were £40,000 the business might be worth between £160,000 and £320,000).

If the assets are worth more than this formula produces it probably means that insufficient profits have been earned from the investment in the assets.

In those circumstances there may be a greater gain in shutting up shop and just disposing of the assets rather than selling as a going concern. I hope that I have convinced you of the value of seeking professional advice!

Q One of my drivers handed in a Camcorder as lost property. It probably has a value of £500 or more. It has not been claimed. He insists that, if it remains unclaimed for three months, it is his by law. Is this so?

DK, Hampshire.

a Well, he is right about the three months! The Public Service Vehicles (Lost Property) Regulations 1978 require the operator to notify the owner where the property is available for reclaim, if the owner's address is readily ascertainable.

If, however, lost property found on a PSV which is worth more than 50p remains unclaimed after three months, the title to it passes to the operator, not the finder.

In this the PSV law differs from that applicable to lost property found other than on a PSV and handed to the Police.

In those circumstances the title does pass to the finder if it remains unclaimed. This is, of course, the legal answer. The employee relations answer is something for you to decide once the property is yours to keep or dispose of as you think fit.

MARKSMAN WILL ANSWER MORE QUESTIONS ON MAY 15

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DAF

1988 (E) DAF SB3000 - JONCKHEERE P599

51 reclining seats + courier, centre sunken toilet, continental door, fridge, Nomad coffee machine, video, radio/pa/cassette, double glazed, blinds to side windows, decorative curtains, Current MoT.

1986 (C) DAF MB230 - PLAXTON 3500

51 seats + courier, radio/pa/cassette, curtains, MoT April 1994.

1983 (P.P) DAF SB 2300 -

BERKHOF ESPRIT, 53 seats + courier radio/pa/cassette, power door, curtains NEW MoT APRIL 1994.

DUPLE 425

1988 E DUPL 425 -

CUMMINS L10, 7 SPEED MANUAL GEARBOX, 51 reclining seats + courier, centre sunken toilet, fridge, drinks machine, continental door, choice of two, MoT's 23/12/93 & 6/1/94.

1988 E DUPL 425 -

CUMMINS L10, AUTOMATIC GEARBOX, 50 seats + courier, rear sunken toilet, continental door, fridge, drinks machine, MoT 3/1/94.

NEOPLAN

1988 (E) NEOPLAN-SKYLINER

MERCEDES V10 - ZF MANUAL GEARBOX, 77 reclining seats + courier, toilet, fridge, water boiler etc, radio/PA/stereo, TV's & video. Mot Feb '94.

1987 (P.P) NEOPLAN-SKYLINER

GARDNER 6LYT - ZF AUTOMATIC, 77 seats + courier, toilet, fridge, water boiler etc. - current MoT.

1987 (P.P) NEOPLAN-JETLINER

SCANIA K112 - MANUAL, 49 seats + courier, continental door, current MoT.

1986 (C) NEOPLAN-SKYLINER

MERCEDES V10 - ZF MANUAL, 75 seats + courier, toilet, fridge, water boiler etc. - current MoT.

1985 (P.P) NEOPLAN-SKYLINER

MERCEDES V10 - ZF MANUAL, 77 seats + courier, toilet, fridge, water boiler etc. - current MoT.

1983 (P.P) NEOPLAN-SKYLINER

MERCEDES V10 - ZF MANUAL, 77 retrimmed seats + courier, toilet, fridge, water boiler etc. - current MoT.

LEYLAND

1989 (F) LEYLAND - TIGER

(CUMMINS L10 - 250), ZF MANUAL GEARBOX PLAXTON 3200, 53 recliners + 4 standees, double glazed tinted blinds to side windows, radio/pa/cassette, Telma, ABS & chassis autolube, 5 identical vehicles available, excellent value & condition, MoT's from Nov '93 to Feb '94.

1987 (D) LEYLAND - TIGER

(TL-11 260), JONCKHEERE P50, 6 speed ZF (splitter), 50 rec seats and courier, N/S rear toilet, curtains, radio/pa/cassette. MoT June '93.

1986 (C) LEYLAND - TIGER

(TL-11 245), PLAXTON 3500, 6 speed ZF, 53 rec seats and courier, continental door, curtains, radio/pa/cassette, pannier lockers, MoT March '94.

1982 (X) LEYLAND - TIGER

(TL 11 - 218), PLAXTON VIEW MASTER (EXPRESS DOORS) 53 seats recently re-trimmed current MoT.

1982 (X) LEYLAND LEOPARD

5 speed semi-auto gearbox, Willow brook 003 body, Express doors, 44 seats + 8 standees.

1979 (T) LEYLAND LEOPARD

PLAXTON SUPREME (EXPRESS). Semi-automatic, 49 seats, choice of two, MoT 6/1/94.

SCANIA

1991 (H) SCANIA K113

PLAXTON 3500, Telma, 49 seats + courier, centre sunken toilet, continental door, TV monitor and video recorder, radio/PA/cassette, Eberspacher, MoT 1994.

TOYOTA

1989 (G) TOYOTA - OPTIMO

(6 cyl), 18 seats, curtains drinks facility, power door, current MoT.

VOLVO

1990 (G) VOLVO B10M -

CAETANO ALGARVE (low driver), 57 seats, continental door, radio/pa/cassette, toilet fitting optional, current MoT.

1989 (F) VOLVO B10M -

VAN HOOL Alizee 'H', 6 speed ZF, Telma, 49 reclining seats + courier, footrests, centre toilet, double glazed, continental door, radio/pa/cassette, current MoT.

1987 (D) VOLVO B10M -

PLAXTON 3200 (low driver), Telma, 53 Vogel seats and courier, double glazed, curtains, radio/pa/cassette, part pannier lockers, MoT 1994.

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No smokes without fire

THE saga of tobacco advertising on SYT Mainline buses continues. Managing director Peter Sephton has now called for a total ban on all advertising, and pledged his support for such a campaign to the Sheffield Health Authority. Nevertheless, the underlying message still stands - if every other operator is doing it so shall we.

Having already upset local councillors, some members of the passenger transport authority which is the sole shareholder in SYT - health authorities and health councils, Mainline has now launched its advertising campaign.

And not being interested in damage limitation, it is now targeting the smoke-filled rooms of the "socialist republic of South Yorkshire" by telling the public that there are "25 Royals found on bus".



SYT firing up the locals

Where have we read this before?

NO author can receive a greater accolade than an endorsement from *Coach and Bus Week*.

David Gladwin must have been over the moon when we waxed lyrical about his book, *Midbus - Coach and Bus Week* March 13, 1993. But note the headline - "Book has elements of

deja vu." Prophetic indeed. Then, four issues later, we have "Another glimpse of good old days".

Well, the headline should tell the story, and this one certainly succeeded. For this was another glimpse of the same book. Have you ever had that feeling? What is it called? Oh yes - deja vu.

Hammering home the point

SUCCESSFUL bus advertising is destined to be eye-catching. The current campaign for a well-known wallpaper adhesive manufacturer combines welcome advice to car drivers with a sticky message.

However, some advertisers go to great pains to get the slogan across. Witness the application on this London Central Titan where the vertical section of the T advertisement seems to have been nailed in place rather than glued.



Should they get their hands dirty?

MICHAEL Heseltine, president of the Board of Trade, has backed an imaginative work-experience initiative which takes two DTi mandarins to Rover's Longridge works.

They have swapped their briefcases for spanners and welding gear as members of the department's vehicles division seek hands-on experience on the shopfloors of major UK car and component manufacturers.

The DTi says it has placed particular emphasis on establishing a good rapport and effective dialogue with British industry. Its guinea-pigs are the head of the division, Martin Stanley, and one of the senior secretaries, Rosemarie Simmonds.

Should the influence of such commendable enthusiasm and commitment be encouraged? Just imagine what might happen if it spreads unchecked from Victoria Street into Marsham Street.

DRINKS ON THE MOVE



For freshly made teas, coffees, soups and chocolates, the Drinkpac is the ultimate in on-board refreshment, guaranteed to delight your passengers at a cost to delight you.

With a range of 29 different, single-portioned drinks to choose from, each one heat-sealed to preserve freshness, flavour and aroma, the Drinkpac is quick and easy to use. Simply peel back the lid, tip the contents into a cup, add hot water and stir and your drink is ready in seconds.

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Experience the taste of the unique Drinkmaster Beverage system.

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NOW

Package regs - don't shoot the messenger

From Alan G Bowen

SIR

I read with great interest the anonymous letter (*Coach and Bus Week*, April 10) regarding the implementation of the EC Directive on package travel. I suspect that there are many small operators in a similar situation, but the blame, for once at least, does not lie with Trading Standards Officers.

The directive was finalised in June 1990, but did not set out any means of securing financial protection for clients - that was left up to each individual state within Europe to decide. In the United Kingdom the Department of Trade and Industry was given the job of implementation and I know from lengthy discussions with them, that numerous options were considered. The first, and probably the best, would have been a licensing system, but it might also have been the most expensive for smaller operators.

Unfortunately, it seemed that as the deadline drew nearer - De-

cember 31, 1992 - near panic set in and the proposals were amended by the DTI up to a month prior to implementation. Indeed, only six weeks prior to commencement, no one really knew what the final outcome was likely to be. Trading Standards Officers were therefore just about as unprepared as the travel industry as a whole and, if it is any consolation to the writer, neither they, nor ABTA, considered the implementation to be satisfactory.

It must be right, however, for those who use trust accounts - and the reality is for many operators that there is simply no other means of complying with the regulations - for consumer assurance that there should be an independent trustee. If the company itself acts, there will always be the suspicion that the protection isn't 100 per cent as it is obviously easier to influence a director, employee or indeed Aunt Agatha than it is an independent trustee.

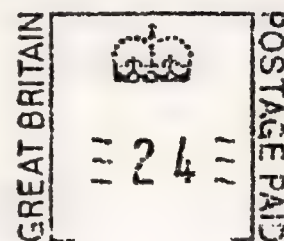
As far as your correspondent's second concern, so far as I am aware, only three of the 12 Euro-

pean countries have so far implemented the directive in full and none offers trustee accounts as an option at all.

Finally, Mr Schofield, in his letter of the same date, makes a valid point on the need to protect oneself legally when contracting for any part of the package. As the organiser will always be liable, the time for contracting on the back of cigarette packets is clearly over.

If hotels or other suppliers refuse to sign contracts binding them to provide what they promise, an operator must stop using them until they do. Hopefully, suppliers will realise fairly quickly that it is as much in their commercial interests to deliver the promise as it is legally binding on the tour operator to deliver to the consumer.

Alan G Bowen
Head of legal services
ABTA
55-57 Newman Street
London W1P 4AH



Write to: The Editor,
Coach and Bus Week,
EMAP Response Publishing Ltd,
Wentworth House,
Wentworth Street,
Peterborough, PE11DS,
or by fax: 0733 62656

The editor is always pleased to receive letters for publication in *Coach and Bus Week* and will, if requested, publish these anonymously. But please attach your name and address for our information.

Hit back at Germans

From David Parry

SIR

For years now British tour operators have had to pay substantial amounts to travel through Germany.

The directive to register for VAT and to equate each German tour for payment to the German government typifies the bureaucratic nightmare for all of us in the UK. Now charges have been doubled to leave or enter from non-EC countries. This adds even more insult to injury particularly when travelling onwards to another EC country such as Italy.

It's time we took matters into our own hands and to withdraw German tours. Least of all we should direct our transit nights into other countries.

Calculations for our tour costs are made too far in advance to include these higher charges and administration time.

As usual we can expect very little help so it's up to us.

How do other operators feel?

David J Parry
Managing director
Parrys International
Cheslyn Hay
Walsall
West Midlands

Come on folks - get up to date

From John Rowberry

SIR

I came into coaching rather late in my working life. I am an owner driver and have found *Coach and Bus Week* very informative, but why on earth are you still quoting fuel prices in gallons? I have not seen a pump that serves gallons in 10 years. I buy in litres, I know that my coach needs 35 of them to do 100 km. At last, the prices at the forecourts are marked up in pence per litre. In fact, the last time I had a choice was some 12 years ago when in Ireland I asked the forecourt attendant for £10 worth of petrol and was asked if I wanted it in litres or gallons.

John Rowberry
Upton-on-Severn
Worcester

Stay within the law and anybody can be a trustee

From Stephen Moore

SIR

I refer to the letter by Anon in respect of EC Directive 90/314 (*Coach and Bus Week*, April 10).

Anon is quite right. There is nothing whatsoever stated in the directive that prevents anybody being a trustee providing that they work within the law. The professional advice given to his bank is incorrect and I would suggest he seeks banking facilities elsewhere.

We at ICT have recently sent a letter to all our clients advising them that they can operate their own trust accounts thus saving on exorbitant costs levied by insurance companies, solicitors and accountants. To comply fully with the new legislation, any operator running a trust account

must also have a repatriation scheme in place to ensure that any stranded passengers are returned to the UK in the event of insolvency.

The British Association of Wholesale Tour Agents (BAWTA), of which ICT is a founder member, has set up a repatriation scheme for clients who book tours through one of its members. The annual charge for this is a mere £80 and all tours, providing they are booked with a BAWTA member, will be covered under the scheme.

Stephen J Moore
Sales and marketing director
Independent Coach Travel
Studios 20/21
Colmans Wharf
45 Morris Road
London
E14 6PA

Ignorance is no defence

From Brian Chapman

SIR

I wonder how many of your readers are breaking the law! When the EC Directive on package holidays passed on to the statute books on January 1, 1993, the Government agreed to allow a honeymoon period of three months to enable operators to comply with the new regulations. The three-month period expires on March 31, 1993.

Any coach operators who sell package holidays after April 1, 1993 without having some approved form of financial failure protection in force will be breaking the law and will be liable to extremely severe penalties. If there are still some operators out there who have not arranged their passenger protection insurance, they run the risk of prosecution. Don't be an April fool - act now!

Brian Chapman
Managing director
Chapman Stevens
High Wycombe
Bucks

Just what are the rules?

From Len Wright

SIR

The recent case of Tufnells Parcels v DoT highlights the definitions of self-employed drivers and who should have the O-licence.

A brief outline of this case is as follows: Tufnells hired vehicles to one self employed driver, and three other named businesses who in turn employed drivers. All drivers are under the jurisdiction of Tufnells, only carrying their goods and vehicles are parked at Tufnells, which also supplies uniforms and keeps the tachographs. The magistrates ruled that the defendants do not have to have an O-licence.

On taking early retirement I was approached by two operators and asked if I would look after the tachograph records. As this entailed some expense I decided to register as a self-employed person keeping full accounts of ex-

penditure. As I also do occasional PCV driving I decided that I could put this through the books as well.

On receiving my first wages from the PCV driving I was stopped income tax. On questioning the reason for this I was told that the tax inspector did not recognise drivers as being self employed. I contacted the local tax office and the explanation was as follows: Even though I had registered as a self-employed person by offering my services as a driver I was employed by the coach company. However, if I offered my services as a driver with a coach this was classified as being self employed. This is in contrast to the ruling by the Dunstable magistrates.

With regard to the O-licence issue in the Tufnells case, I fail to see the reason why these people who hired the vehicles from Tufnells and in turn employed drivers to operate them were cleared of unauthorised use. With great respect to the magistrates I

think they made a wrong decision which again makes a mockery of the O-licence situation, whether it concerns goods or passenger vehicles.

Questions I would like to ask are 1) Who would be responsible for any offences committed, ie tachographs, weight, etc? 2) What is the correct explanation of a self employed driver; 3) If I hire a vehicle from a company then offer my services to that company with the same vehicle and under its jurisdiction am I still self-employed and who has to have the O-licence?

It will be interesting to see if the DoT (or VI) will appeal against the magistrates' decision, or alter the definition of who should be the holder of the O-licence. I would urge all readers to read this case in full as all this applies to the PSV operator as well.

Len Wright
New Costessey
Norwich

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88 (F) DAF SB 2305 DHS-CAETANO ALGARVE, 53 recliners, courier seat, power door, soft trim, radio, PA cassette, (choice of 3)	£64,500
88 (PP) DAF MB 230-CAETANO ALGARVE, 53 recliners, continental door	£57,500
88 (E) DAF SB 2300 DHS-DUPLE 340, 53 recliners, toilet	£59,500
87 (PP) SCANIA K92-PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, 51 recliners, toilet, power door, fridge, boiler, radio	£57,500
87 (E) VOLVO B10M-PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, 53 recliners, tinted windows, power door, continental door, radio	£69,950
87 (D) MAN-VAN HOOL ALICRON, 51 recliners, toilet	£62,500
86 (C) DAF MB DKVL-PARAMOUNT 3500, 51 recliners, toilet	£57,500
85 (C) LEYLAND TIGER 245 SA-PARAMOUNT 3500, 49 recliners, rear toilet, continental door, courier seat	£39,950
85 (B) SCANIA K112-JONCKHEERE P559, 51 recliners, centre toilets, double glazed berth, courier seat, continental door	£49,950
85 (B) VOLVO B10M-VAN HOOL ALIZEE, 53 recliners, double glazed, power door, soft trim	£54,500
83 PP VOLVO B10M-DUPLE LASER I, 57 seats, power door, soft trim	£29,950
82 (X) R1114 FORD-PLAXTON SUPREME V, 51 seater	£12,750
81 (W) FORD T152-PLAXTON SUPREME, 35 seats, power door	£11,750
81 (W) BEDFORD YMT-DUPLE DOMINANT IV, 53 seats, radio, tinted windows	£7,950
73 (PP) BEDFORD YRT-PLAXTON ELITE, 35 seats, rear lounge, tables	£2,750

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National Express



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Keith Taylor, managing director, National Express.

National Express ranks as one of Europe's biggest and most successful operators of express coach services. Its routes cover the length and breadth of Britain, from Aberdeen in the north to Penzance in the south.

It's a demanding operation with high vehicle mileages, high passenger loadings and no room for error. And it comes as no surprise that for this most arduous of operations National Express chooses Plaxton.

The latest National Expressliner offers high standards of comfort for up to 49 passengers - and it's based on Plaxton's successful Premiere 350.

"We are selling a high quality service in a very competitive market," says Keith Taylor, managing director of National Express. "Our promotional campaigns are designed to win new customers - and we've got to back up the advertising messages with a coach which will live up to our customers' expectations.

There are now 200 Expressliners in service, including twenty new Premieres offering 10,000 seats a day to National Express customers. Each Expressliner averages 150,000 miles a year which is a pretty fair test of serviceability and of durability.

And it's a test which Plaxton passes with flying colours.

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A new approach to Bus & Coach

Bridging the

ALTHOUGH the Humber Bridge is viewed by some as a civil engineering white elephant and political folly, Stuart Appleby saw it as representing a challenge and a business opportunity.

Nowadays he can be seen busily shuttling between Lincolnshire and East Yorkshire in a top-of-the-range BMW and wearing a hand-stitched business suit to oversee his widespread coach and bus interests. But, despite the image, he still maintains a very down-to-earth, hands-on approach.

He is disdainful of mobile phones, preferring to arrive at his various operating centres and travel agencies unannounced.

"Attack is the best form of defence in a declining market," he said with obvious concern for his 80-vehicle operation, which spans over 100 miles of the countryside north of East Anglia.

"It might be a big body - but it needs a strong heart," he adds, with more than just a hint of altruism.

All his operating centres involve units of around eight vehicles, although all are subject to the discipline of a unified and central accounting system back at home base in Conisholme near Louth in Lincolnshire.



This former Bus & Coach Council president has never considered the busman as an island. His most fulsome praise goes to those he has worked alongside in the BCC.

But perhaps his greatest influence was his operator father Ronald - who took over what was a four-vehicle business, after driving for the competition, from Mr Appleby's grandfather in 1947, the company founder William Appleby.

"I remember days during the school holidays being taken to see the 2pm Cheltenham interchange, Grey Cars' spick and span garage at Torquay and the high specification Glenton vehicles - all of which profoundly impressed me, along with Noel Tatlock, who first developed the high-floor concept.

"When I joined the business in 1956 it was as an apprentice fitter. That was Monday to Friday. At weekends I worked for my mother's business, started by my grandmother, selling ice cream from the Applebys Ices van in Grimsby market.

"If you worked 90 hours a week it was never enough." But Mr Appleby learned the tricks of the trade while he witnessed its main developments.

In the mid-fifties the Applebys fleet was still only eight vehicles strong - not exactly a galloping progress from the business' foundation in 1913 at Conisholme.

"RAF Manby was our business," said Mr Appleby of the time when he first experienced the laws of supply and demand. "There was a lot of work for between four and five vehicles - so we used to hire in to double the fleet."

And work at the time included school contracts and the village bus service.

In 1954 the fleet increased to eight vehicles after Walmsleys was acquired - and 1956 saw the first continental tour, with a Commer TS3/Duple to Cologne, and private hire tours in the UK.

In the same year the coach operation and ice cream business were respectively incorporated as RW Appleby Ltd and Applebys Ices Ltd. Mr Appleby joined the board from the start and participated in further acquisitions - a formative time for both the individu-

'Unemployment rose to over two million and employers realised they could get by without works buses,' Mr Appleby said. 'The decline continued and is continuing. It has changed the face of the industry - and we found that profit had gone out of the window'

al and the company.

It now seems so long ago, but under bus regulation about the only way to expand local operation was to acquire operators in adjacent villages - such as the two-bus fleet of Red Bus at Marshchapel and the three buses of Frank Adams at Saltfleet.

But when Grimsby-based Granville Tours bought the adjacent 15-vehicle Starks of Tetney, Applebys felt obliged to acquire works, schools and Wallace Arnold sub-contractors Arthur Brown of Caistor near Grimsby.

"It was a tired old fleet of 15 vehicles which we bought over a five-year period," said Mr Appleby. "But we had to ensure a supply of surplus vehicles for private hire at the weekends." It also brought within the business four operating yards in Caistor and Market Rasen.

When the Bus Grant arrived in 1972, Applebys used it to improve the image of its existing fleet - and before it went in 1979 bought an additional eight vehicles.

During this period it bought ABTA travel agencies in Grimsby, Lincoln, Horncastle, Louth, Market Rasen and Immingham - and

Stuart Appleby's story success in the coach and bus his inimitable and indi

the 12-vehicle operation of Hudsons of Horncastle, along with its local bus services, works and schools contracts, and a tour licence to Ilfracombe under the "Lincoln Tours" badge. Applebys was now a major force south of the Humber with a fleet strength of 50 vehicles.

But Mr Appleby got his first taste of recession in the early eighties when works contracts for Humber Ship Repairers, British Steel, British Sugar and the Morrell cannery disappeared.

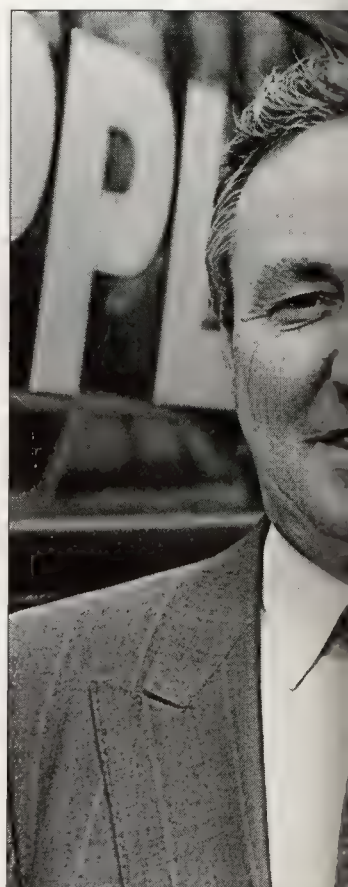
"Unemployment rose to over two million and employers realised they could get by without works buses," said Mr Appleby. "The decline continued and is continuing. It has changed the face of the industry - and we found that profit had gone out of the window."

Not surprisingly, the fleet age profile increased, along with maintenance costs. But it was a general slide towards lower overheads.

"Up until 1981 we were well away from any motorways, so the old Bedfords were OK," Mr Appleby said. "But when they arrived, Bedfords were not the horses for the course - and we had to look for heavyweights."

The Leyland Tiger/Plaxton Supremes were later replaced with Volvo/Van Hool - leading up to Applebys Scania/Berkhofs used today on its Halcyon shuttle operation. But there hangs a tale.

"Coach deregulation was followed by recession, the loss of contract services and the start of the collapse of the private hire market," said Mr Appleby. Applebys immediately responded by changing tack, taking over



Stuart Appleby's business

the Humber

**...s one of expansion and
...d bus industry. He tells
...ridual tale to Rod Davey**



...terests span the Humber

Grimsby Bus Station from Lincoln Road Car - running weekend express services to London and excursions and tours. "We spread our activities through our readymade outlets at the ABTA agencies and Appleby coach sales offices," Mr Appleby said.

But apart from such organic self-help, Stuart Appleby's personal business development underwent a sea change. He approached the leisure market full tilt after a chance meeting with other operators on an educational to DAF in Eindhoven and Jonckheere in

high and you need a clear agreement on management overheads. But, if the ground rules are clear, it works quite well.

"The explosion of the shuttle market presented a massive opportunity for the industry," he added.

"But the once massive market was destroyed by incompetence and ill-prepared operators not giving the best available service on a long and tiring journey."

In 1988 he surprised most of the industry by acquiring the 12-vehicle Halcyon shuttle business. "I never intended to amalgamate it with Applebys tour business because there were two reasons for the purchase. The business benefits from a flexible and diversified selling approach - and it provided short lead times, using North Sea Ferries, to the Continent.

"It enabled us to both serve a new market and protect Applebys' share."

But he is not exactly overjoyed by the

'The explosion of the shuttle market presented a massive opportunity for the industry,' he added. 'But the once massive market was destroyed by incompetence and ill-prepared operators not giving the best available service on a long and tiring journey'

sidiary, Scarborough and District. "The Wallace Arnold sell-out to East Yorkshire created the opportunity for seafront services and local excursions supported by 300,000 miles of local bus work," he said. "I expect the Scarborough operation to be running about 20 vehicles by this summer."

Apart from the parallel ice cream business, non-bus diversification includes a transport cafe "offering truckers German highway standards of service" between Lincoln and Grantham on the A46, a Hino truck agency, and the 60-bed Craig Mhor Hotel on the A9 "operating in-house and offering accommodation to the general groups market to generate off-season business."

Meanwhile, Mr Appleby looks to the future closely watching swings on the international currency markets - and imagining surcharges for the first time.

He also watches interest rates closely, predicting a drop in demand accompanying a drop in earnings from savings in his main 55-plus age group catchment. "It's like Russian roulette," he says. "And the 80 per cent increase in German road tax imposes unforeseen costs of about £6 per head."

He also feels that the BCC is "the backbone of the industry," and would like to see the BCH bonding scheme, with all its major



shuttle market. "It requires a lot of expertise, with constant marketing reviews and audits, to achieve profitability."

Marketing becomes the be all and end all - along with a commitment to 5,000 miles per week per vehicle and paying up front for accommodation on a 20-week basis.

"You're selling cheap, and that can attract a difficult sort of customer. With today's customer protection in Article 7 it could be expensive in the event of any disagreements." Yet it is also an opportunity to build on a company with a 15,000 passenger/year following.

However, before buying Halcyon, one of the pioneer shuttle operators, his first acquisition north of the Humber was Boddys of Hull and Bridlington, along with its property including a car park and "Aladdin's Cave" selling novelties and rubber feet.

"I had to look for ways of increasing the fleet utilisation of what was a seasonal operation - so in 1983 I introduced an extended tour programme and weekend express services," Mr Appleby said.

In 1989 he started his Scarborough operation - operating six open topers along the seafront in competition with EYMS sub-

marketing and client acceptance behind it, carry on in its present form.

On Article 7, he sees bonding as the first option, but sees insurance as a good option for smaller operators.

"But there comes a point when it will be difficult and cumbersome to administer," he adds. And he is suspicious of the trust route, foreseeing cashflow difficulties - and operators "getting into it for the wrong reasons," because they can secure neither a bond nor insurance.

But perhaps one direction to watch Stuart Appleby moving is a result of his 1991 rescue of Huddersfield-based Ivy Travel. "It enables us to develop a Halcyon M62 corridor from Manchester and through Halifax, Huddersfield, Bradford and Leeds through to Ferrybridge."

One wonders how this 51-year-old entrepreneur - who is married with two daughters, one with a marketing degree and the other with fine art design and the Halcyon livery under her belt - finds the time for game sports, Formula 1 and Group C racing, and organising coach operator groups on long-haul trips to the far ends of the Earth.

Roeselare, discussing the best ways to approach the inclusive tours market.

"We found that most operators went to the same places - and it ended in a joint marketing initiative with Paul Tappin, Skills of Nottingham and Youngs of Cambridge."

All four operators devised a joint colour brochure - a marketing initiative later consolidated with a joint shuttle operation in the 10-day budget holiday market.

"It was a four-cornered arrangement so it was relatively easy for one operator to run one week every month - and Applebys was left broadly responsible for the booking charts and paying the bills," he said.

"We agreed the departures and the revenue split - dividing profit on what was generated per head."

It is another illustration of Mr Appleby's belief in the power of co-operation - and shows a system which he still operates on express services with Hornsby and Road Car's Coach Link.

"It is an excellent basis for any joint operation," he said. "The marketing costs are

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Duration cut after catalogue of convictions for Ellerby's

CONVICTIONS, prohibition notices and doubts over finance led to Bishop Auckland-based Ellerby's Coaches appearing at a Leeds disciplinary inquiry before North Eastern traffic commissioner, Keith Waterworth.

Charles Ellerby, a partner, said they had been convicted at Faversham Magistrates Court, Kent, over the use of two vehicles which were overloaded in respect of the first and second axles and the gross weight.

The drivers were prosecuted and he was prosecuted as the operator. The offences occurred on what had been a short shoppers' trip to France. The passengers had bought large quantities of beer.

It was the first time, to his knowledge, that coaches had been weighed. Apparently it was after the Zeebrugge disaster that the weight of coaches was questioned. The beer was taken off the coach and it was allowed to proceed.

There was a further set of convictions at Faversham Magistrates for exceeding the axle weight of a vehicle, but not the gross weight, said Mr Ellerby. The vehicle was carrying 49 passengers with their luggage for a holiday in Spain.

A driver who was new to them at the time loaded the luggage from the front compartments to the back. However, the vehicle was only designed to carry luggage in the rear compartments. It had not occurred to him to warn the driver beforehand.

There was also a conviction at Rotherham Magistrates for an offence concerning a tachograph not being installed when required.

He had purchased the vehicle new in 1989, and he received a certificate for the tachograph which was valid for three years. He had thought that it was three years before the tachograph had to be checked or calibrated again. In fact the tachograph should have been checked after two years.

Mr Waterworth said it was now apparent to Mr Ellerby that

YOUR WEEKLY REPORT ON LAW AND THE COACH AND BUS OPERATOR BY MICHAEL JEWELL

coaches did have a maximum permitted weight and it was DoT policy to check weigh coaches as well as lorries.

Asked what steps had been taken to prevent further overloading offences, Mr Ellerby said that all their drivers had been given instructions and new drivers were shown how to load the vehicles.

They operated seven vehicles and to make sure their tachographs were calibrated and checked at the right time, it had been arranged that the dates should coincide with the vehicle's

were not countersigned as they only had one mechanic and they had not realised it was required in such circumstances.

Mr Waterworth said that Mr Ellerby must understand the importance of countersigning the inspection records. The inspection records should demonstrate that defects had been identified, that something was done about them and that the vehicle was fit to be back in use.

Asked about a complaint concerning a tour in August 1992, Mr Ellerby said they had a good work-

He borrowed a vehicle from Frasers Tours, using his own driver and licence disc.

The driver was instructed to remove the disc when the vehicle was dropped off, unfortunately he omitted to do so. He tried to contact Mr Fraser but the following week Frasers Tours went out of business

annual test.

Mr Ellerby gave an assurance that there were no prosecutions pending.

Questioned about a vehicle issued with an immediate prohibition in October 1990, Mr Ellerby said that, as the vehicle examiner checked the handbrake, there was a crunch and the handbrake failed to work on one of the rear sides.

The prohibition was cleared that afternoon. He thought that the failure was due to metal fatigue. The defect had manifested itself at an unfortunate time, he said.

Mr Ellerby said that one vehicle was issued with a delayed prohibition in September 1992, as a king pin could be lifted but there was no play. The vehicles were given thorough examinations on both occasions and those were the only defects found. There was a maintenance examination in September 1992 which, though generally satisfactory, needed to be followed up as a number of inspection records showed no mileage recorded and none had been counter signed. The records

ing relationship with Frasers Tours.

In March 1992 they had a requirement for a double-decked vehicle. He borrowed a vehicle from Frasers Tours, using his own driver and licence disc.

The driver was instructed to remove the disc when the vehicle was dropped off, unfortunately he omitted to do so. He tried to contact Mr Fraser but the following week Frasers Tours went out of business.

He finally managed to contact Mr Fraser in May, and he told him the vehicle had been repossessed by the finance company and that the disc had been left in the vehicle.

He contacted the finance company and then the new owners of the vehicle, but neither had any recollection of an operator's licence disc being left in the vehicle.

Nobody had any permission to use that disc. The first he knew about the complaint was when a traffic examiner visited him and told him about it. Apparently the state of the vehicle had been frightening.

He was told that his firm's name had been on the operator's licence identity disc.

The disc had been used fraudulently, said Mr Ellerby. He visited Mr Fraser and he still denied using the disc. He had never been able to get the disc back.

The unsatisfactory trip to Spain, which was the subject of the complaint, was something that he had had no control over at all. They never turned a vehicle out dirty or in bad repair. They were very proud of our vehicles. It was upsetting to see the complaint on their record.

Asked how he controlled the ten licence discs when there were only seven vehicles in operation, Mr Ellerby said that the spare discs were locked in a drawer. He would never let it happen again and he would never again let discs be haphazardly used.

Financial evidence was heard in private at Mr Ellerby's request.

For the firm, Roger Hird said that Mr Ellerby had responded to criticism, and he would continue to respond to what was asked of him.

Cutting the duration of the licence, so that it now expires one year early in July 1996, Mr Waterworth said that he had taken into account the positive issues as well as the other matters.

He accepted Mr Ellerby's explanation concerning the complaint in August 1992, but he would hold him to his personal assurances concerning the use of the firm's O-licence discs. He would also keep Mr Ellerby to his assurances about not "bouncing cheques", especially when they were in payment of licence fees.

He wanted producing a set of accounts up to March 1993 by August. It was not for him to ferret out information from Mr Ellerby. It was for Mr Ellerby to demonstrate that he met the requirements. If he did not then the licence would end.

He hoped that the proceedings had brought home to Mr Ellerby that he had powers that he would use if things did not improve.



Praise for firm as licence is renewed

WESTERN Travel group subsidiary Red & White Services Ltd has had its South Wales licence renewed for the full five years at a Cardiff public inquiry before South Wales traffic commissioner John Mervyn Pugh (*Coach and Bus Week*, April 24).

Last October the duration of the licence was cut to the end of March 1993, instead of November 1995, in the light of 53 prohibition notices, 13 of which indicated neglect (*Coach and Bus Week*, October 24).

The company, which operates more than 300 buses on routes in Gwent and Mid Glamorgan, took over the eastern operations of National Welsh Omnibus, being granted a licence authorising operation from eight depots in the South Wales area in 1990.

It was seeking renewal in respect of 185 vehicles and had

been called before the commissioner because of a number of prohibition notices imposed on its vehicles since the October public inquiry.

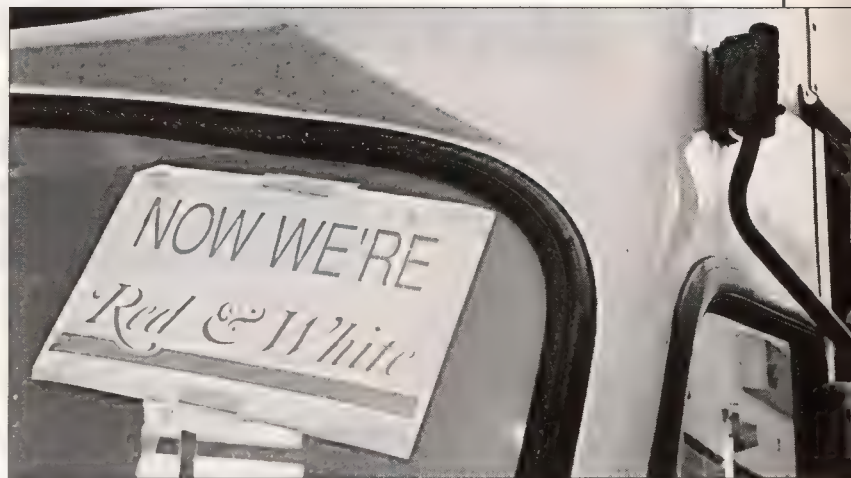
For Red & White, it was said that the one immediate prohibition issued had been for a defective warning device, which had been working when the vehicle went into service.

The majority of the delayed prohibitions had been for smoke emission.

Mr Pugh said that, after looking at the defects listed on the prohibition notices, he was quite satisfied that none of them had constituted a danger to the public.

Norrie Thomas, a director, said the planned system of maintenance introduced was working very well. Initially, there had been some problems in getting drivers to accept the system.

However, discussions had taken place with senior officers of



Red & White took over Nat Welsh eastern ops

the Transport and General Workers Union, who had given the system their wholehearted support.

Renewing the licence, Mr Pugh said it had been a great disappointment when the company was first called to a disciplinary inquiry after the demise of National Welsh Omnibus. However, it was to be noted that 90 per cent of the vehicles that Red & White had taken over were previously National Welsh vehicles.

"You inherited a fleet not up

to the standard expected and to your credit you have put your house in order. I hope you go from strength to strength," Mr Pugh said.

He thought great credit was due to the T&GWU for the support it had given the company in implementing the recommended planned maintenance system.



Jailed rapist given 10-year PSV ban

TONYREFAIL coach operator Ronald Gwyn Griffiths, who is currently serving a seven-year jail sentence for rape, incest and indecent assault, has had his O-licence revoked and been banned from holding or obtaining such a licence for 10 years.

Mr Griffiths, who held a licence for one single decker and three minibuses operating from Llantrissant Road, Tonyrefail, in the name of Trane Travel, had been called to a Cardiff disciplinary inquiry before South Wales traffic commissioner, John Mervyn Pugh. Mr Griffiths had been informed of the proceedings by the prison authorities but had declined to attend.

Mr Pugh said he understood that Mrs Griffiths had left her husband and her whereabouts were unknown. It had been indicated that Mr Griffiths' brother-in-law, a Mr Mainwaring, would attend the inquiry but no one was present.

Mr Griffiths had been convicted of the offences at Cardiff Crown Court in January and it went without saying that he had lost his good repute.

In revoking the licence, and disqualifying Mr Griffiths, Mr Pugh said that, in view of the seriousness of the convictions, it was his duty as a traffic commissioner to disqualify Mr Griffiths for a long period for the protection of the public.



MoTs 'an investment'

WEST Wales coach operator Howard Owen was told to look on putting his vehicles through fresh MoT tests as an investment, after he had protested that it would be a financial burden.

Mr Owen, who trades as Gwenal Travel, of Drefach, Llanelli, had been called to a Cardiff disciplinary inquiry before South Wales traffic commissioner John Mervyn Pugh.

However, in deciding to renew Mr Owen's five-vehicle licence for the full five years, Mr Pugh said he was taking that unusual step as he had been "very impressed and affected by a letter Mr Owen has sent to the Department". The long letter was clearly "written from the heart".

Mr Pugh said he did not like operators getting upset and he wanted them to leave the court happy and content. The problem was that one of Mr Owen's vehicles had been issued with a prohibition notice, marked "neglect", because of holes in a chassis cross member.

Mr Owen said he had been in busi-

ness for 15 years and he thought he was being pressurised more than anyone else. He agreed that, though his facilities were described as adequate, they were not undercover. He said that he had made arrangements with a garage to use their under-cover facilities whenever necessary.

There was no ill feeling towards any operator, said Mr Pugh. However, the standard of testing had improved. "It is now higher and we do take a strong stance with vehicles that attract prohibitions marked neglect," he said.

Mr Owen said he had a daily nil defect reporting system, and that letters had been sent to drivers outlining what they had to do, but not to his fitters, but Mr Pugh said that might be where things were going slightly wrong.

There could be missed inspections, delayed inspections or poor inspections, coupled with poor repairs. Mr Owen should write to his fitters, telling them that his licence depended upon them and that no vehicle should go out if it had a defect.



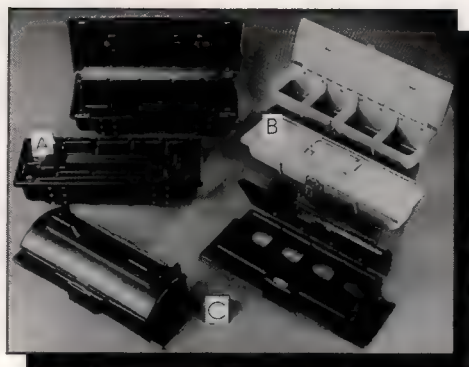
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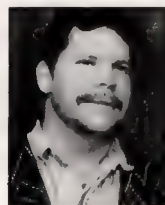
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Remanufactured Lucas Kienzle Tachographs being placed in the master test rig for their 18-hour final check

Tacho test units supplied

CANNOCK-based Tristem Electronics has supplied the Birmingham headquarters of Lucas Kienzle with 25 new-style individual tachograph test units. This followed the supply of a microprocessor-based tachograph function test rig and a prototype unit for use by bench and quality engineers.

Lucas Kienzle operates a nationwide new tachograph and

service replacement scheme from Gravelly Park, Birmingham. After remanufacture, failed units are tested using the new equipment which is claimed to be more reliable, cooler, quieter and easier to use while ensuring high levels of running accuracy and reliability.

Contact Brian Doody, director, Tristem Electronics on 0543 579626.

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kW, 2.2 hp electric motor is fed from a 220-volt supply, and is fitted with overload protection, three radial pistons and a built-in bypass valve.

The washer retails at £224 plus VAT and is supplied with high-pressure hose, gun with trigger-blocking device and lance with progressive pressure adjustment.

Contact Outdoor Power Products on 061 320 8100.

System designed for the small firm

A NEW chart analysis system specifically designed to meet the needs of smaller fleets is now available from Lucas Kienzle Instruments.

The system brings in-house analysis of tachograph charts, providing significant additional benefits to the small business.

Software has been developed in conjunction with the Department of Transport. It is used with the Lucas Kienzle semi-automatic chart reader to ensure that

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An alarm you can't keep quiet

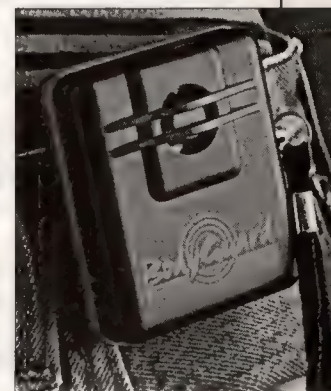
A TOUGH new personal security alarm, designed to withstand violent attempts to silence it, has been launched by Bodyguard Security.

Internal steel reinforcement of its ABS polycarbonate case gives the Bodyguard BG002 resistance to attack or damage. Bodyguard says that attempts to silence the pager-style compact alarm by stamping on it, and even driving a car over it, have proved fruitless.

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Each alarm is supplied with rip cord, strong belt clip and a mounting bracket which enable it to be used in a vehicle, or to double as a door or window alarm. The BG002 costs £15.99 (including battery, VAT, postage and packing) or the BG003 with additional on/off switch costs 40p more.

Contact Bodyguard Security on 0438 350274.



The BG002

Phonedays: Signwriters start thinking now

B RITISH Telecom is urging the signwriting industry to start thinking now about its key role in the two-year approach to Phoneday when dialling codes change.

Phoneday is Easter Sunday, April 16, 1995, but early planning will smooth the code change with minimum inconvenience and expense.

Dialling codes displayed as part of telephone numbers on internal and external signs and vehicle liveries should be changed. BT is also highlighting the implications in advertisements in specialist trade publications like Coach and Bus Week.

Most smaller businesses and residential customers will be able to make any necessary changes to

telephones and equipment such as fax machines and answering machine messages over the Easter weekend.

National dialling codes will be changed with the addition of an extra digit, 1. For example London's 071 becomes 0171 and Peterborough changes from 0733 to 01733. Five cities - Leeds, Sheffield, Nottingham, Leicester and Bristol - will receive new codes and an extra digit in their local numbers.

The international dialling code from the UK will change from 010 to 00.

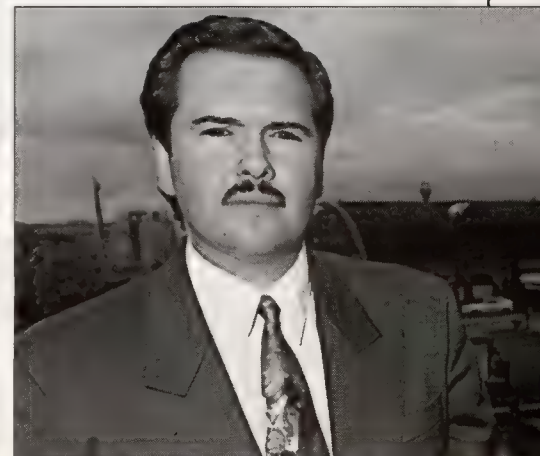
An information leaflet and checklist is available from BT on a special free Phoneday helpline - 0800 01 01 01.

Company's award will not mean complacency

T ECHNORIZON International is the first vehicle wash manufacturer to obtain BS 5750 part one accreditation.

Although existing management systems were retained as a base, managing director Tony Cockerill said: "It wasn't all plain sailing. Although in principle, the original management system was adopted, the audit and detailed assessment not only showed up our strengths, it also identified our training needs."

Mr Cockerill says companies like Technorizon that achieve the standard cannot rest on their laurels as the BS standard is continually reassessed.



Tony Cockerill

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Pushing the boat out at Devonport

SET for the three days of August Bank Holiday and staged in the south west, Plymouth Navy Days is tailor-made for short breaks with groups and individuals.

The huge event at Devonport is one of the Navy's biggest gatherings of warships, many open to the public. Foreign navies have also promised to send warships.

Some of the competitions are also open to the public. One event in particular - the Dragon Boat race - would appeal to fundraising teams. The 40-foot paddle boats require a crew of up to 22 - so a Rotary club team and sup-

porters would make up a coachload.

The entertainment during the day includes the usual Naval competitions, some on the river. Visiting aircraft in a flying display include Harriers and a WWII Swordfish bi-plane torpedo bomber.

Visitors can also take a close look at Plymouth Naval Dockyard, the Navy running river trips along the Tamar throughout the three days. Civilians will provide plenty of fast-food catering and other retail stands.

The popularity of Forces open days - this one regularly attracts

40,000 - combined with the sea-side location and timing could even help the event stretch to a themed short break based at the many Plymouth-area hotels, or an excellent day trip for tours already in the West Country.

Discounts for group bookings are generous. The normal £4 adult seat drops to £2.50 for pre-paid groups. The Navy is also providing flyers and posters to help operators publicise excursions and short breaks.

Full details are available from Lt Commander RE Just, on 0752 555914, fax 0752 557644.

Czech hotel extended

CRUSADER coaches of Barnsley has branched out into tour wholesaling, with five-night bed and breakfast breaks in the former Czechoslovakia for £99.

John Atkinson and Cynthia Crowcroft have concentrated a lot of tours into the Eastern European country, running 15 departures last year and planning around the same for this season. Now, one of the hotels Crusader uses has been extended and is anxious to fill its new rooms during the '93 season.

The hotel is of typical Czech standard, with toilet and wash basin but shared bathrooms. Nonetheless, the refurbishment has been carried out to a high standard, says Cynthia Crowcroft.

For details, contact Crusader on 0226 293566.

STF confounds critics as show is record success

SCOTLAND'S Travel Fair in Glasgow set new records and attracted around 900 buyers over the two days, said STB chairman Ian Grant.

He said the critics had been proven wrong: "Again there has been talk of the future of STF. We will, of course, be looking at the whole situation after the show," he said. "But I've heard nothing but favourable comment."

It was estimated that £1 million-worth of business was completed on the first day, one deal

with a Japanese buyer bring bookings for 6,000 room nights. The German market, said Mr Grant, had proven particularly strong and buyers of particularly high quality.

Among the 280 exhibitors were four coach operators - Lowland Coaches, Silver Coachlines, Clyde Coast Coaches, SMT Coaches and Grampian/Mairs/Midland Bluebird. SMT's Gordon Curlett said the range and number of inquiries had been good, though the "conversion rate" to bookings had yet to be seen.

Mercy mission needs vehicle

AREGULAR Romanian mercy mission has hit problems and now the drivers running medical supplies and doctors to the country have appealed for industry support.

Five Alder Valley drivers originally mounted the expedition to poverty-stricken children's homes two years ago, bringing relief to hundreds of orphans living in squalid hospital conditions.

The drivers subsequently

went separate ways, then AV was taken over by Stagecoach group.

Now, organiser Derwin Nutt is desperate for the free loan of a bus or coach - preferably a double-deck - to ship essential supplies on the regular September run.

Anyone who can lend a hand is asked to contact Mr Nutt at 15 West Hill, Elstead, Godalming, Surrey GU8 6DQ, tel: 0252 703775.



Deep Sea World - Scotland's newest attraction

Aquarium nets 25,000 in week

SCOTLAND'S newest attraction, Deep Sea World, opened at Easter with a splash, attracting 25,000 visitors in its first week.

The £4 million aquarium venue just off the Forth Road Bridge has proven a hit both with locals and with tourists, though marketing manager Ann Miller says she had deliberately avoided trying to attract the groups trade until the euphoria died down.

But the walk-through undersea

marine zoo is poised to be one of the coach operator's top venues, with catering and plenty of parking space available. Its proximity to main routes into eastern Scotland adds to its appeal as a mealstop.

By summer, Deep Sea World hopes to have in captivity a porbeagle shark - a first if the seven-foot creature survives its quarantine.

Full details of group visits to Deep Sea World are available on 031 220 1335.



Left: Roman amphitheatre, Nîmes

The South of France is Nice ... St Tropez and Cannes. But it's also Cap d'Agde, Sète and Nîmes in the western region of Languedoc-Roussillon. Frank Forster visited the area and discovered it had just as much, if not more, to offer

As nice as Nice

FRANCE'S Languedoc-Roussillon region in the south west has always been overshadowed by the so-called "real" South of France - St Tropez, Nice, Cannes on the Cote D'Azur.

So much so that a recent "educational" organised by Tours Wholesaler Albatross of Maidstone, Kent, was said by Christian Kergal of the region's tourism department to be the first such visit to the area for UK coach operators (*Coach and Bus Week*, April 10).

But many holidaymakers have experienced some of the disadvantages of the Cote d'Azur, such as overcrowding and higher prices, as well as its delights. Others may just be looking for something new. So Languedoc-Roussillon could be just the place. It is huge region stretching from the Rhone Valley to the Spanish border and north as far as the Cévennes. In fact, Roussillon in the south is culturally Catalan rather than French. Within Languedoc-



Place de la Comédie, Montpellier

around 2,000 miles in eight days in a Yorks Coaches of Northampton Kässbohrer Setra and even managed to visit other areas of France on the return leg.

First overnight was around 300km from Calais at Meaux, just outside Paris, at the Hotel Comfortel (group rate FF 235 half board) having crossed the Channel with a virtual absence of any formalities on P&O's *Pride of Calais* (remember we're in the Single Market now?) before setting off for Mende, at the very north of Languedoc-Roussillon, and around 700 km from Paris on the N88.

Mende, a small town with an

Roussillon are 30 resorts, such as Cap d'Agde and Sète, and medieval fortified towns like Aigues Mortes and Carcassonne. The city of Nîmes has some of the best preserved Roman buildings in the world and the university city and capital of the region, Montpellier, the largest and one of the most beautiful concourses in Europe. And tucked away and unknown to many a coach tourist are some fascinating venues and whole areas worth seeing.

For the gourmet, the region is a paradise — just like the rest of France. Unfortunately, UK coach tourists, mostly in the over-55 age group, can sometimes be unadventurous on the food front. Even they, though, could not fail to appreciate such famous local dishes as Cassoulet, which is based on pork and beans and originates from Castelnaudary.

Languedoc-Roussillon is also France's oldest and most prolific wine-producing region, so visits to vineyards, wine cellars and wine centres provide another opportunity for excursions.

The Albatross tour was to cover



Coaches at the walled city of Carcassonne



The village of Ste Énimie



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COACH TOURS & EXCURSIONS



Left:
bamboo
park



Right:
Sète

11,000 population, is the capital of Lozère, one of the five départements of Languedoc-Roussillon.

Albatross md Manfred Thelen, himself on the educational, said his tours would probably take in an overnight in the Macon, Lyon area rather than Mende, before continuing straight to Nîmes, travelling by autoroute all the way. But don't forget to budget for the cost of tolls. The Albatross coach covered around 2,000 miles and, although this was not all on motorways, tolls added up to around £110.

One of many alternative routes would be to take the A10 from Paris to Orleans, the A71 to Clermont Ferrand, and the E11 on to the toll-free A75, still in various stages of construction after St Flour. This takes you almost to Mende and so is ideal for those wanting to visit the Cévennes and Gorges du Tarn.

In Macon, Albatross uses the Hotel Mercure, Mâcon Saint Albain, a three-star, 98-roomed establishment off the A6 Autoroute, complete with a large coach park and vehicle wash. All rooms have bathroom, minibar, multi-channel colour TV, phone, air conditioning and double glazing. Group rate is FF 245 half board.

However, the diversion to Mende and the Tarn Valley was well worth it, although the winding mountain road, the D986, is precarious at times. But from it the view of the village of Ste Énimie far below is spectacular.

Ste Énimie must be one of the prettiest little ancient stone villages in France and is about 27 km from Mende. A walk round its cobbled streets made a welcome break. The town nestles in Les Gorges du Tarn, a series of spectacular gorges through which runs the River Tarn. There are many sites such as caves

and caverns, and ancient buildings worth visiting along or in the vicinity of the gorges. Indeed, the whole region is probably the best in France for "subterranean spectaculars" because of its geology.

But it was soon onward to the Cévennes National Park — a bit like our moorland national parks in places — via the villages of Montbrun, Quezac, Ispagnac (famous for its food) and Florac and on to the D907 and Anduze. About two kilometres from here is La Bambouseraie de Prafrance. With its "mini-climate" this 12-acre park is said to be the only place in Europe where giant bamboos grow. While looking like a tree the bamboos are in fact a form of cereal crop and grow in a similar manner but much faster. A guided walk through this park is a fascinating and pleasant way to spend an hour or so. Not only are there 150 varieties of bamboo but all sorts of exotic trees. The walk could prove a bit much for some elderly passengers, however.

There is a "Laotian village" complete with bamboo huts, a water garden and large greenhouses full of orchids and other beautiful blooms. The gift shop sells many items, mostly made from... bamboo. Group rate is FF 18.



La Grotte des Desmoiselles

Anduze is 12 km from Alès, 45 km from Nîmes, and 12 km from St-Jean-du-Gard. Between Anduze and the latter, a steam railway runs, via the Bambouseraie, every day in the summer months. The railway has special programmes for groups.

Next stop was the Grotte Desmoiselles, a most spectacular cave in the heart of the Thaurac mountain so big it is called the Subterranean Cathedral, being up to 120 metres long and 52 metres high. Travel from Anduze via the D982, D999 and D986.

Having entered the cave via a funicular railway, visitors can view stalactites and stalagmites forming weird and wonderful shapes in the limestone. The caves are beautifully lit and the steps and banisters built of stone to blend in. The whole thing could be a scene from a science fiction film.

Again, some elderly passengers would find it difficult to get round the cave but, as well as the main tour, group members have

a choice of just riding to the top of the funicular and doing a reduced tour, or staff will take frail people straight to the cathedral part. It is recommended to do the tour in the morning and to book in advance. Group rate is FF25. Outside is a coach park from which there is a

view of the countryside below for those who do not or cannot go in.

About one hour coach drive from the cave is Nîmes, the "Rome of France" with its huge amphitheatre and the Maison Carrée, two of the best preserved Roman monuments in the world. It is only 10 years since restoration work was started on less ancient buildings, however, of which



Pont du Gard



La Maison des Vins wine centre, Montpellier

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COACH TOURS & EXCURSIONS

there are many worth seeing

The amphitheatre, Les Arènes, was built around 100 AD. It has 60 entrances and could hold 20,000 spectators. Today it is the setting for bullfights, of which there are many in the region, and concerts. The Maison Carrée or square house was built in the first century BC and is one of the best known examples of a Roman Temple still standing. It houses the Museum of Antiquities.

Slightly more modern, the Novotel Atria at Nîmes in which the Albatross group stayed, is a 119-roomed three-star, air-conditioned building complete with a 500-seat theatre/conference hall, restaurant and indoor patio with sliding roof.

All rooms have bathroom, phone, TV and minibar.

It is only minutes from the amphitheatre and there is parking for coaches nearby. Group rate is FF 275, including buffet breakfast and three-course dinner. Albatross uses this hotel as its base for its Provence tour, as Nîmes is just across the border from the Provence, itself very much in the public eye at the

moment through Peter Mayle's book and the accompanying TV series. From here many other nearby attractions can be visited. The spectacular Roman aqueduct, the Pont du Gard, which carried water to Nîmes, is only about 20 kilometres away and spans the Gardon River. The aqueduct is 49 metres high and 275 metres long. It costs FF12 to park the

port with some excellent seafood restaurants. A magnificent view of the town and the surrounding area can be had from the top of Mount St Clair which towers above Sète. The views from the old pilgrimage chapel are spectacular and it is accessible by coach, for which there is parking.

Nearby, the new resort of Cap d'Agde with its miles of sandy

within the walls of old city, from which there are magnificent views of the modern town.

It costs FF 50 to use the large coach park, unless guests are staying at one of the hotels in the old town, and a guided tour for a group of up to 50 costs FF550.

The university city of Montpellier has what is probably the largest concourse in Europe, the Place de la Comédie, with its magnificent fountains.

One of the city's newest and most revolutionary hotels is the Astron Suite in the Antigone district and just off the autoroute at Montpellier Est. Here guests can have a three-roomed 40 square-metre suite for the price of a double room. In-room meals are included. Group rate is FF 240.

An excellent place for groups of up to 50 to visit is La Maison des Vins, a wine centre about 10 minutes from the city centre representing the Coteaux de Languedoc wine syndicate. Here groups can have a good value meal for around FF 80 - FF 100 and taste the wines as well as buy some bottles to take home.

Nice, eh?

Group rates quoted are for '93

Languedoc-Roussillon: contacts

● **Comite Regional du Tourisme Languedoc-Roussillon**, 27 Rue de l'Aiguillerie, 34400 Montpellier — including excellent trade guide called **Languedoc-Roussillon, Holidays and Coach Tours**.
Tel 01033 67228100, fax 01033 67661415

● **Stephen Rogers Marketing**

Service, Bristol — The Tour Operators Guide to Southern France, Languedoc Roussillon, distributed free to coach and tour operators
Tel 0272 221055

● **Albatross Tours Ltd**, 88 King Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1BH, Tel 0622 662615, fax 0622 759454

coach and the site can be very busy in the peak season.

For lovers of wildlife the Camargue wildlife and ornithological park offers the chance to see 330 species of wild birds including pink flamingos.

From here it is not far to Sète, a resort but also a busy fishing

beaches was created in 1970, having been literally dredged from a silted outcrop.

History buffs will enjoy the old fortified towns of Aigues-Mortes and Carcassonne. The latter, in particular is worth an extended tour and lunch can be had in one of many restaurants

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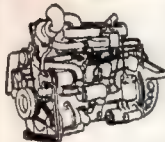
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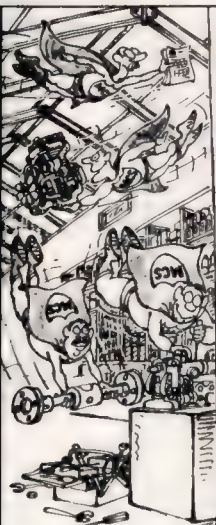
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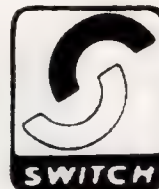
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Yours faithfully
Peter J. Franklin

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A vacancy has occurred in a South London coach company, for a sales representative, with ambition and ability. The successful applicant will be responsible for expanding the private hire and tour programme, using their own initiative.

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We are now seeking to appoint a General Manager (Executive Director) to lead the Company through the next stage of its development and exploit its potential. You will assume full profit responsibility for this £multi-million turnover organisation and will effect improvement and spearhead further growth in all sectors of the market. A strong leader, you will also be able to combine a strategic overview with the ability to translate this into action and will have developed financial, operational and marketing skills.

It is essential that you are a graduate and professionally qualified. You must demonstrate a high degree of commercial acumen and will, above all, possess a 'hands on' management style with the ability to motivate and co-ordinate the activities of your management team and all employees of the company. Commitment to providing an efficient service on a commercial basis is also essential. Applicants who have proven transport management experience at a senior level will have an advantage.

✓ Apply in writing, sending full details to the City Manpower Officer, Municipal Offices, Trippett Street, George Street, Hull HU2 8AA, to whom they should be returned by Wednesday, 19th May 1993.



**Kingston upon Hull
City Transport Ltd.**

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

RESULTS OF TENDERS FOR LOCAL BUS SERVICES

As required by the Transport Act 1985 the results of tenders that were submitted to the Public Transport Sub-Committee on 7 April 1993 are now available in main Essex County Council libraries.

Copies may also be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope (9"x6") to Public Transport Branch, Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1LF.

R W Adcock
Chief Executive and Clerk

15 April 1993

(30192/A/A)

LONDON COACHES

TRAFFIC ASSISTANTS

As part of the Traffic Team reporting to the Traffic Manager, you will manage the traffic operation on a shift basis which includes nightwork, weekends and Bank Holidays.

Responsibilities are varied and call for a good communicator with a flexible and positive approach. You will organise staff and vehicles in the most cost-effective way possible, keeping records of tachograph and mileage, and generally helping to maintain the smooth and efficient running of the operation.

You must have, or be able to obtain a PCV licence and a working knowledge of EEC/domestic drivers hours and tachograph regulations.

Applicants must possess a CPC qualification or equivalent, and must be self-motivated and able to work under pressure, effective communication skills are essential.

Salary : subject to experience and qualifications.

Successful applicants would be required to pass a probationary period.

If you are interested in the above post, please write with a full CV, or alternatively telephone for an application form on 081 877 1722 – Personnel Manager, London Coaches Limited, Jews Row, Wandsworth, London, SW18 1TB.

London Transport bus services

Invitation to tender

London Transport invites tenders for the operation of the following schooldays only bus route.

It will continue to be marketed as an integral part of the London Transport network.

345 CHINGFORD STATION – GOODMAYES

The closing date for tenders is Monday 21st June and the service is due to commence in Autumn 1993.

If you are interested please talk to Nick Newton on 071-918 3468 for details and application forms.

Or write to him at:

*Tendered Bus Division, London Transport,
Broadway Buildings, 55 Broadway, London
SW1H 0BD.*



London Transport
(36963/A/TEN)

Walker to head UK subsidiary of Teleride

TELERIDE Sage of Toronto has appointed Chris Walker managing director designate of the company's new British Teleride subsidiary.

The company provides the Teletrans range of integrated software for public transport operations. One component, the G/Sched system for bus and crew scheduling, tripled its UK user base in 1992.

Mr Walker takes up his new position on October 1, 1993, and is already working part-time for Teleride Sage by arrangement with his present employers, West Midlands Travel.

He started his career in public transport in 1963 at the schedules office of Leeds City Transport. Subsequently he worked on most areas of transport operations, including driving, conducting, control of services, radio control, service planning and garage operations.

By 1980 he was manager of traffic and engineering operations at one of West Midlands PTE's largest garages. Since the WMT employee buy-out in 1991, Mr Walker has worked within the information technology department with responsibility for over 20 UNIX computers.

Training consultant new CIT committee chairman

TRAINING consultant John Robson is the new chairman of the Chartered Institute of Transport's transport tutorial committee.

The committee manages the CIT's comprehensive training programme which provides distance learning and live tuition. Projects range from the Certificate in Transport through to the professional qualification of MCIT and up to a MSc degree in transport in association with the University of Salford.

Mr Robson, 42, says he is looking forward to the CIT meeting the constantly increas-

ing demand for training. He is a teacher of transport studies and, having obtained a diploma in training management from Sunderland University, he established himself as a self-employed training consultant specialising in transport.

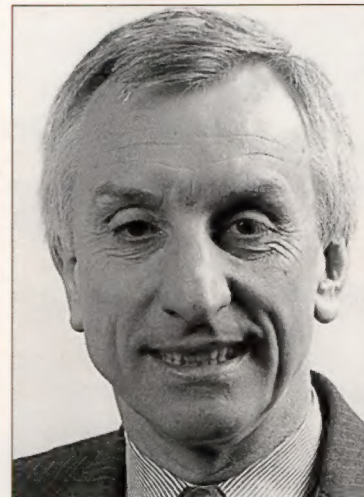
The CIT's Certificate of Transport meets all requirements for the Certificate of Professional Competence, national and international, either for freight or passenger. Furthermore it tests basic transport management knowledge beyond that required for the CPC.

Expansion is manager's brief

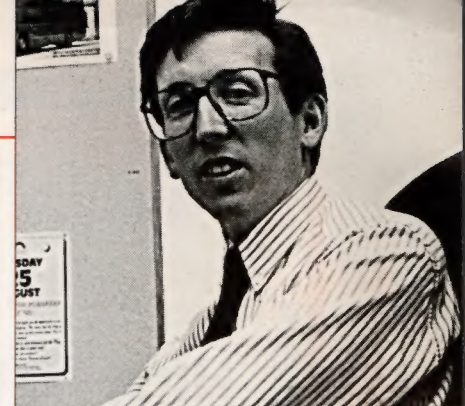
MIKE Bayliss (right) has been appointed the new network development manager for CH Jones (Walsall Ltd), with particular responsibility for the nationwide network of Keyfuels and Diesel Direct sites.

Mr Bayliss, 45, who was formerly sales and marketing manager for Action Service Stations, a subsidiary of Gulf Oil, said: "My job is to enlarge the Keyfuels and Diesel Direct Site Network from 400 to 600 by the end of this year - we are looking for new sites countrywide - from the West Country to the Highlands. Our longer-term objective is to hit the 1,000 site target."

CH Jones is effectively a national diesel bank. Running on the lines of a bank account the



Keyfuels system allows the user to buy his own fuel from any source at his own negotiated price, and lodge that fuel in his account. The fuel can then be drawn from the network of 400 bunkerpoints located near motorways, trunk roads or at busy urban locations.



Andy Grout

South for Grout

NORMAN Allen Group Travel, the wholesale tour operator, has appointed Andy Grout business development manager for the southern part of the country.

He joins Laurie Kennard, who covers the north and midlands.

Together they will be researching clients' requirements and introducing them to NAGT's new products for 1994.

Mr Grout was a former director of Aladdin Tours Olney, Buckinghamshire.

Bendix appoints marketing chief

BENDIX HVS-Europe has appointed Steve Howell technical marketing manager - after amalgamating the original equipment and aftermarket sales and marketing operations - at Kingswood, Bristol.

The position brings together technical and field service support and publicity expertise under one roof.

Mr Howell, 37, will have overall responsibility for co-ordinating all Bendix HVSE activities relating to the technical services department, technical publications and publicity.

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| Other (please specify)..... | ii) Double deck buses..... | |
| | iii) Coaches..... | |
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